PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE

G. J. HOLYOAKE

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PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE

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BY
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE
AUTHOR OF "SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE"

"All who in the service of God or Man disseminate sentiments of truth and equity, are agitators in the better sense of the term."
Maxim of Progress

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Inscribed

TO THE

REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

(HIMSELF A MASTER IN THE ART
THIS BOOK IS WRITTEN TO COMMEND) WHOM THE AUTHOR
FOUND TO BE FAIR IN DISCUSSION, IN DAYS
WHEN FEW MINISTERS WERE SO;
AND WHO IN LATER YEARS WAS HIS FRIEND, NOTWITHSTANDING
HIS DIVERGENCY IN THEOLOGICAL OPINION.

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PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

MANY years ago I printed an outline book on this subject (*Public Speaking and Debate*) for the use of persons who found learned treatises on oratory uninteresting, or too profound to be intelligible. Though dealing alone with the Rudiments of the art, it was reprinted in America, and in 1853 the *New York Tribune* described it as being 'unpretentious and practical.' After the experience of forty years, I write a new book, and trust the reader will find the same qualities in it.

In 1862, the Rev. Mr Vickers of Boston, America, then visiting England, informed me that he took up, in a New York book-shop, a copy of a work entitled, *Public Speaking and Debate*, by John Bower. Upon opening it he found that it was an American edition of *Public Speaking and Debate*, by G. J. Holyoake, with the name of the author borne by another. This, I hope, may be taken as proof that the book was thought useful by the new author.

But a testimony of which I have always been proud was that of Wendell Phillips—who Mr Bright said to me had the most eloquent voice which spoke the English tongue. Mr Phillips sent me word that he had lent 'his well-thumbed copy of *Public Speaking and Debate* until he had lost it, upon

the theory [he benevolently held] that he who most needed a book had the greatest right to it.' Upon that principle, Mr Phillips certainly did not require it. Still, I sent him another copy. It was probably the ethical theory of debate contained in it, upon which we had had personal controversy,* which interested him.

The earliest and most generous of English critics was the Rev. Dr Joseph Parker, who, when he edited the *Pulpit Analist*, said to young preachers: 'There is Mr Holyoake's *Rudiments of Public Speaking and Debate*. Get this book if you can. I am afraid it is out of print. It is full of wise and practical counsel, and rich with allusion and quotation of the best kind,' in illustration of which a passage of two pages was cited. Considering that Dr Parker's belief differed widely from mine, of which he was well aware, seeing that we had held a public debate thereupon for several nights, I cite his words (though it will seem egotistical to do it), since they exceed anything I could think of saying myself, to the end of engaging the attention of the reader to these pages, which I suppose to be the object of all introductions.

Another motive higher than egotism, induces me to inscribe this book as the reader sees I do. When Mr Allsop proposed to supplement an annuity given me, Dr Parker sent a subscription and wrote a letter to the *Daily News*, intended to be of service to the fund. I cannot agree where I would—were coincidence of belief a matter of will—but an act of kindness I never forget, and I am glad when I can acknowledge it.

As respects the texture of the following pages, the reader will discern that it has no merit save incitement, if indeed it has that.

What is called a 'systematic treatise' is what is usually looked for on the subject of public speaking. But I have

* See 'Reply to Letter of Ion' in the *Melodeon*, Boston—the only reply Mr Phillips told me he ever made to a European critic.

found those who have followed such have rarely become speakers of mark, until they have freed themselves from the 'system' and trusted to themselves. A system is a sort of machine, and one reared in it, is apt to be entangled in wheels within wheels, when the time comes for action; or he finds that the machine, though of most excellent construction, will not work just when it is most wanted to do it. Now, a series of chapters on the essential parts of public speaking—not chained together, but capable of independent use on emergency, with a springing board in each of them from which a speaker of moderate activity can throw himself at will, as it were, into the heart of an argument—will best serve the practical student. The execution may not equal the design, but this is the rule on which these pages are written.

Whatever may conduce to improvement in the art and character of agitation, as it is the hope of the Author this book will do, may be of public service, seeing what an increase of wise, reasoning voices will be heard in the land, as sure-footed democracy advances.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, being apparently only acquainted with the bad meaning of the term, lately spoke contemptuously of 'agitators,' whereupon the Rev. Stewart Headlam justly asked, 'Were not Paul, and even our Lord Himself, agitators? Surely it depends upon what you agitate for, and how you agitate, as to whether an "agitator" is to be condemned or praised.' Mr Headlam might have asked, where would the Archbishop be but for that superb, irrepressible agitator Luther? Not thought much of by the archbishops of his day.

Just-minded agitation prevents the putrefaction of opinion, which is as fatal to States as to Truth. Cowper wrote:-

> Winds from all quarters *agitate* the air,
> And fit the limpid element for use.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL AND PUBLIC USES OF RHETORIC

In this country, where the political genius of the people lies in self-government, where liberty depends upon the capacity of justly stating its claims, the art of public speaking has public importance.

To be able to take a subject well in hand, as a stage-coach driver does his horses, to hold the reins of argument firmly, to direct and drive well home the burden of meaning, is a power useful to every man who rises to address a congregation or a council, or stands up in Parliament to persuade, or on a platform to convince a meeting.

Perfect expression is even an indispensable household acquisition—a social charm, an economy in explanation, and hourly ministers to good understandings. In public, a good speech, well-spoken, is part of the necessary defence of truth and right. In one of his famous letters to Mr Delane (1864), Mr Cobden remarks :—

'It is known that I am not in the habit of writing a word beforehand of what I speak in public. Like other speakers, practice has given me as perfect self-possession in the presence of an audience, as if I were writing in my closet. Now, my ever-constant and over-ruling thought while addressing a public meeting—the one necessity which long experience of the arts of controversialists has impressed on my mind, is to avoid the possibility of being misrepresented, and prevent my opponents from raising a false issue—a trick of logic as old as the time of Aristotle. If I have, as some favourable critics are pleased to think, sometimes

spoken with clearness, it is more owing to this ever-present fear of misrepresentation than any other cause.'

This remarkable antobiographical passage shows how the practice of rhetoric had trained great natural powers to explicitness and mastery in their use.

Progression is a series of stages—individuals first, then groups, then classes, then nations are raised. You can no more introduce the people at once to the highest results of philosophy than you can take them to the summit of a monument without ascending the steps, or reach a distant land without travelling to it. But it is possible to impart method in classification, coherence in inferences, and inculcate justice in invective. The people are not waiting for new discoveries in thought; there is more wisdom extant than they master, more precepts than they apply. The scaling-ladders of the wise, which they, having mounted the citadel of wisdom, have kicked down, are yet of service to those who are below. The author has picked one of these ladders up, and reared it in these pages for the use of those who have yet to rise.

In the ancient state of society, war was the only trade, force the only teacher, and the battle-axe the only argument. A transition has, indeed, taken place; the times, and means, and ends are changed. The struggle now is for income and intelligence, and most men are engaged in a double battle against want and error. Provided the literary sword will cut, few will quarrel about its polish. If the blade has good temper, he who needs it will put up with a plain hilt.

A poor man cannot rival the rich in luxury of life, but he can in luxury of knowledge. He cannot furnish his house as the wealthy can, but he can furnish his head. He cannot found a house of note, but he may found a mind of mark. Though some kingdoms may be afflicted or adorned with kings, learning has always been a republic, where all are equal who know.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF RHETORIC

PLATO's definition of rhetoric is still bright and suggestive; namely: 'Rhetoric is the art of persuading the minds of men.' Rhetoric is commonly regarded as a pretentious, superfine, or ornate way of presenting an argument; whereas rhetoric merely means the art of speaking to a purpose. A rhetorician originally meant a public speaker, whose object was orally to influence opinion in courts, in council, or in public meetings. The highest effort of public speaking is seen when the object of the speaker is to persuade the minds of men to accept some great principle, or adopt some just policy in public affairs.

There were two Herberts of mark in literature—George (1581) and Edward (1593). Edward is commonly spoken of as Lord Herbert of Cherbury. It is he who likens rhetoric to 'a diamond which is of small use until it is cut and polished, when its angles send forth flashes of light which arrest and delight every eye.'

By reasoning we satisfy ourselves, by rhetoric we satisfy others. The rhetorician is commonly, but unwisely, considered most perfect who carries his point by whatever means. 'Men like to see the man who is a match for events, and equal to any exigency.' But it is plain we must make some distinction as to the manner in which a point is to be carried. We may as well say that a man may carry the point of life by any means, that is fill his pockets

by any means, as influence men by any means. A low appeal to the passions we call claptrap. Dr Johnson, who put morality into his definitions, said, 'Oratory is the power of beating down your adversaries' arguments, and putting *better* in their places.'

It implies force and individuality of mind when a man desires to reason out things for himself. Most men prefer to be told what to think; they are perplexed, and find themselves lost in a maze of feeling, prejudice and interests; they cannot see far, nor appreciate what is near. They might have a commanding view of the field of difficulty from an eminence, but eminences are not to be attained without exertion, and most men are disinclined to exertion. They are therefore grateful to anyone who will climb the mount and tell them what he sees. But if he can do more—can tell them not only what they should do and why they should do it—he opens their minds, satisfies their judgment, and inspires them with a new and, let us hope with Dr Johnson, a right purpose. He who satisfies by right reason the conscience of others, commands them without fraud or force. He teaches no unmanly subjection of the understanding; he neither invokes nor needs submission to authority; he represents the only leadership consistent with progress—the leadership of ideas commended by reason. Such are the just aims of honest rhetoric.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS MEANT BY ELOCUTION

THE literal meaning of elocution is 'to speak out.' Dictionaries and writers on rhetoric define elocution as that pronunciation which is given to words when they are arranged into sentences and form discourse. This conception of it confines it to articulation, whereas elocution includes accurateness, distinctness and natural modulation of words, in private as well as public life. Modulation comes by emotion, but accuracy and distinctness of speech come by art.

The object of public speech is persuasion. It ought to be the object of private speech also. To persuade by public speech requires a voice articulate and audible. That is the beginning of practical influence in elocution. A man will speak all his life and never notice that words are merely sounds. Accustomed to see words in books, he forgets, or does not realise, that words are merely sounds to the hearer. The difference between the foreign language and the English consists only in a different set of sounds. A man wonders, when he stands by a telegraph clerk, how he turns ticks into words, and does not know that the ticks are sounds of words made by a machine. Chicago is a fine Indian word, sounding as though written She-càr-go. If anyone should pronounce it Chick-a-go, nobody would understand what place he meant; or should he at dinner, wanting tomàtoes, pronounce the word tom-a-toes, the waiter would not know what to give him.

A speaker must use his ears to learn what sounds he

should make, and be alert with his ears to note what sounds others make. People will listen to one who can be easily heard. The clear, strong speaking man can command a hearing. He who fills the ear carries weight. Few have minds to fill—all have ears.

A letter addressed as follows was a puzzle to the best readers in the Post Office for some time:—'Serum Fridavi, Londres;' when, by reading the address aloud, with the French as well as the English sound of the vowels, it was found to be—'Sir Humphry Davy, London.'

At an Anti-Corn Law meeting held in Glasgow, in 1845, I sat at half-distance from the platform. As my name had been given to the Lord Provost, I was uncertain whether I should not be called upon to take part in the proceedings, and therefore was anxious to hear all that was said. It was at this time that I first felt perfectly the annoyance of indistinct speaking. At the Newhall Hill meetings in Birmingham I had been accustomed to hear Warwickshire orators vocal, but in Glasgow I found they only spoke, and spoke as though they were paid for the sound they made, and did not get a good price for it. At length the Rev. Dr King arose, who spoke with strong deliberateness—words well conceived and well delivered. The syllables fell on the ear like the steady tolling of a bell. His voice was the relief of the night. Whenever I go to a public meeting, I pray that one of the speakers may have Dr King's quality of utterance.

There are two ways of speaking—one from the throat, the other from the chest. The chest voice is louder, and lasts longer. The stage voice is a chest voice, whose uniformity and peculiarity everyone knows. Both actors and singers inflate the chest to deepen, strengthen, and prolong the tones.

Most grammars give a list of about twenty-two words beginning with *h* in which the *h* is not sounded. These words have to be spoken as though they began with a vowel. All other words beginning with *h* must have that letter dis-

tinctly heard. In illustration of this neglect of aspiration* where proper, teachers of elocution say that if the Indian swallows the sword we (h)eat the poker. Care in speaking the aspirate words, and in not aspirating words where the *h* is silent, nor in words beginning with a vowel, will disappoint novelists who, unable to delineate character in which the person is identified by his mind, invent peculiarities of manners or of speech. Writers of small knowledge delight to sneer at those who have less, and write the names of Harriet and Harry without the H. Rapid utterance and a slovenliness of speaking, habitual with those who have not thought upon the intention of speech, make it difficult to them to aspirate when they should and avoid doing it when they should not. To speak the aspirate at will, or to omit it at will, comes easy to those who speak deliberately. Vowels should have a bold open tone—a slight, short, mincing pronunciation of the unaccented vowels is a fault to be well avoided.

Audibility depends chiefly on articulation, and articulation depends much on the distinctness with which we hear the final consonants. They need attention as well as vowels.

W. J. Fox, the great preacher of South Place Chapel, whose voice was neither loud nor strong, was heard in every part, and all over Covent Garden Theatre, when he made Anti-Corn Law orations there, by the clearness with which he pronounced the final consonants of the words he spoke.

I must myself have failed in this respect when speaking at the Walsall Literary Institute, and comparing the speaking of Pitt and Mr Chamberlain as having the same quality of 'overcomingness.' The report in the papers represented me as charging Mr Chamberlain with 'over-cunningness,' which was a sinister imputation neither in my mind nor on my tongue—but the error was owing to defect of the reporter's ear, or more probably to indistinctness in my pronunciation.

* Aspiration is pronouncing the *h* with a full breath.

CHAPTER V

REPRESENTATIVE SPEECH

To speak or debate to any advantage, a person must possess some knowledge of the laws of speech. This means a practical idea of grammar—practical in the sense of being on a level with the average capacity of mankind. As I have said elsewhere, no department of knowledge is like grammar. A person may conceal his ignorance of any other art—but every time he speaks he publishes his ignorance of this. Other arts may be practised occasionally, but the art of speaking must be practised continually. Is it not strange that what all must do hourly, few care to do correctly? There can be no greater imputation on the intelligence of any man, than that he should talk from the cradle to the tomb, and never talk well.

It is as necessary to get knowledge as to *eat* and *drink*. You would not ask another to eat and drink for you. All are as well able to learn as to eat, and it is quite as needful. Lord Herbert, heretofore quoted, tells us that 'between grammar, logic and rhetoric there exists a close and happy connection, which reigns through all science and extends to all the powers of eloquence.'

Everybody knows what representation means in politics. A little thought of this will save a man from ordinary error. To make things plain in speech it only needs that a man makes up his mind as to what he is talking about. If he reasons, let it be not upon hearsay, or rumour or imagination,

but upon ascertained facts, and he will seldom go wrong. What is called grammar is the same thing as the Franchise Bill. It is simply the full representation of the facts of speech. Daily talk is of a man, or of a woman, or of a thing and of something they do. If when we speak of the man we allude to the man as *he*, if we refer to a woman we take care to say *she*, or if we speak of a thing we allude to the thing as *it*, we accord each fair representation. What a man or a woman, or a thing does is expressed by a verb. If one person does a thing we say he *does* it. If two persons do a thing we say they *do* it. If it be a thing which acts, as the sun, we say it *shines*. Just as every voter at the poll says, 'That is my house on the register, and I pay the rent there,' so in grammar all men and women and things have pronouns and verbs and delegate words which belong to them, and by which alone they can be identified and represented, and whoever gives them their proper representation makes his meaning plain to all men. Grammar is but the universal suffrage of common sense.

Inattention to conditions and care is expressed in an epigram of sensible if not elegant lines:—

> He started with lect'ring and ended with verse,
> And from first to last got gradually worse;
> He wrote without spelling, and spoke without rule,
> Long declaimed without knowledge, and ended a fool.
>
> How different another, who thinks night and day,
> Deciding what will best become him to say,
> And how best to say it when he has made up his mind!
> A contrast more useful is not easy to find.

The way in which nouns (which signify names) are represented by pronouns (or fornouns) is shown in an admirable sentence of Dr Johnson's:—

'Pope was not content to satisfy; *he* desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do *his* best; *he* did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of *his* reason,

and expecting no indulgence from others, *he* showèd none to *himself.*'

Without the employment of pronouns the sentence would read, with many unpleasant repetitions, thus:—Pope was not content to satisfy; Pope desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do Pope's best; Pope did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of Pope's reader, and expecting no indulgence from others, Pope showed none to Pope's self.

There is the same kind of representation in verbs. Every verb is connected with or actuated by some noun or pronoun, expressed or understood.

Example:— Hazlitt looked with despairing wonder on Burke's style. Year after year he tried to write a single essay that should please himself.'

If we inquire here who looked? the answer is Hazlitt. Who tried? Hazlitt. Whenever a verb is found, the actor must be found and both examined, to see if the two agree, for every verb must be of the same number, and of the same person, as the noun or pronoun with which it is connected, whether it be expressed or merely understood.

When this representation is observed, a person is said to speak grammatically. Representation is grammar.

There may be good speaking and writing with a moderate knowledge of grammar. One who has authority in these matters asks,—'How would some of our fashionable writers stare if they could read Thucydides or Plato! The best authors had no authority before them. Pascal and Madame de Sévigné wrote before there was any French grammar, I believe; Demosthenes and Cicero before there was a Greek or a Latin one.'

When I conducted classes at Crutched Friars, about 1845, I wrote and printed an Act of Parliament for enforcing the Queen's English. Its clauses prescribed the rules of representation I have explained.

Nor did I find any difficulty in teaching little children to

write little letters to their parents in a week. As soon as a child can make a round O and a straight line it can make all the letters of the alphabet. A is composed of three straight lines, B of a line and two halves of O. A line and half O makes D. G is O left open with a short line. E F H I K L M N T V W X Y Z are all made of straight lines. J is a line and half an O. P is made the same way. R is two lines and half an O. Q is an O and short line. S is two halves of O up end on end. U is made by half an O and two up right lines. There you have the whole alphabet, from which a child will select D E A R M O T H E R in an hour. *A Child's First Writing Book* I published, made this plain and easy to hundreds of children fifty years ago. A child will go forward himself as soon as his teacher finds for him a beginning, which the little learner can see, understand, and feel to be within his power. It is the same with older students on the threshold of a new subject.

CHAPTER VI

LOGIC OF EVERY-DAY LIFE

THE public speaker requires to know something of the rudiments of reasoning, which we may call the logic of every-day life. Logic is the basis of oratory, for no sensible man is moved to action unless he sees a reason for it. Genius in argument consists in seeing relevancies and in enabling others to see them.

Natural pride in the distinction of learning and the passion for superiority, from which the learned are not exempt, lead them to decry all capacity outside their own, so that common sense is belittled and discouraged, and many never use or cultivate the natural power they have, and cease to have confidence in themselves. All the while, common sense is the natural sense of mankind. It is the product of common observation and experience. It is modest, plain and unsophisticated. It sees with everybody's eyes and hears with everybody's ears. It has no capricious distinction, no perplexities, and no mysteries. It never equivocates and never trifles. Its language is always intelligible. It is known by clearness of speech and singleness of purpose. The most prudent of all the children of fact, it never forsakes nature or reason. Some outline laws for its employment in reasoning—if they can be indicated—must be better than a distrustful, aimless and desultory use.

Why, in speaking, should not anyone express himself with

grammatical coherence and a certain bold perspicuity, if not able to reach refinement and elegance? Why, in pronunciation, should ordinary persons not speak with a certain manly openness of vowel sound and a distinct articulation, if not with all elocutionary modulation? Why should not their discourse be expressed in brief, clear sentences? If their punctuation went no further than placing capital letters at the commencement of sentences and of proper names, and periods at the conclusion of sentences, it would render their writing more intelligible than are half the communications they now send to the press. If they mastered only brevity and abrupt directness, and learned to omit wearying prolixity, they would command a hearing in many cases where now they are denied one. If in logic they made a shrewd mastery of plain facts—being as sure as they could, when once set on surety, avoiding conjecture and supposition—if they followed the methods of nature and good sense, where the elaborate methods of art are hidden from them, who will not admit that they would be more intelligible than now, exercise power, and extort attention and esteem where now they excite compassion, or outrage plain taste? The people would be enabled to do these things, but that so many, who prepare treatises for their guidance, alarm them by the display of abstruse dissertation above their powers, their means, their time, and their wants.

There is less occasion to speak of the utility of logic than to show it to be easy of acquisition. John Stuart Mill observes:—'We need not seek far for a solution of the question so often agitated respecting the utility of logic. If a science of logic exists, or is capable of existing, it must be useful. If there be rules to which every mind conforms in every instance in which it judges rightly, there seems little necessity for discussing whether a person is more likely to observe those rules when he knows the rules, than when he is unacquainted with them.'*

* *System of Logic*, p. 12. Second Edition.

Certainly people are not so much prejudiced against logic on account of its supposed uselessness as on account of its supposed difficulties. Logic has always had a good reputation. The popular impression has uniformly been in its favour. It has been valued like the diamond—but considered, like that precious stone, to be of very uncertain access and difficult to polish, save by experts.

Common sense—the exercise of the judgment unaided by scholastic rule—being the best sense the untutored have, they wisely use it, and no wonder if they laud what they are constrained to employ. Doubtless they perceive that common sense would be the better for being made orderly, as a spirited horse is the fitter for use after it has been 'broken.' If common sense can be rendered disciplined sense, it will have all the advantage of the trained soldier over the raw recruit.

A few years ago, England was interested in an American teacher of equine rhetoric, Mr Rarey, who won both money and renown by giving lessons in the art of persuading the minds of horses. Dean Swift, in his *Gulliver's Travels*, shows that the kingdom of horses is in many respects a more rational kingdom than the kingdom of men. The horse is simple in its taste, temperate in its habits, graceful in its movements, proud in spirit, and wary in conduct—which is much more than can be said of many men. Mr Rarey showed that he believed in the reasoning power of horses, and that it is possible to persuade their minds to good conduct. If horses can learn to reason, why not men?

Reasoning is a simple business. To reason is to state relevant facts in support of a proposition. Reason is the faculty of perceiving coherences. Effective reasoning is stating them so that others cannot but see them too. Reasoning on the abstrusest questions consists in arriving at a remote truth by discovering its coherence with the preceding facts in the same

A syllogism is a peculiar *form* of expression, in which every argument may be stated. It consists of three propositions.

1. Whoever have their heads cut off ought to be allowed to ask the reason why.

2. Women have their heads cut off.

3. Therefore women ought to be allowed to ask (politically at least) the reason why.

This is an argument of Madame de Staël in the days of the first Napoleon, in allusion to the beheading of women in France, without allowing them any voice in making the laws which determine the offences for which they suffered.

A syllogism is constructed upon the principle (known as the Dictum of Aristotle) that whatever is affirmed or denied universally of a whole class of things, may be affirmed or denied of anything comprehended in that class. Thus, the first proposition introduces the class of persons who have their heads cut off. Of this class it is affirmed that they ought to be allowed to ask the reason why. But women are included in the class of persons who have their heads cut off, and consequently that may be affirmed of them which is affirmed of the whole class, when the conclusion is —that they should be allowed to ask the reason why.

Logic may be defined as the art of recognising, stating and testing truth. To make a truth plain it is put in the form of a syllogism. All men have common sense. Peter Luton is a man. Therefore Peter Luton has common sense. Now Peter may be a known idiot, but the syllogism is true. The logic of the schools has nothing to do with the truth of the facts, opinions, or presumptions, from which an inference is derived; but simply takes care that the inference shall certainly be true if the premises be true. But the chief premise in the syllogism given is not true—that all men have common sense, and therefore the inference is not true that Peter Luton has common sense.

This is the point that the reader should consider. It

was Sir James Mackintosh, I think, who said that 'men fall into a thousand errors by reasoning from false premises to fifty they make by wrong inferences from premises they employ.' The late Professor Jowett is reported to have said that 'logic is neither an art nor a science, but a dodge.' It is little better than a 'dodge' when it is confined to making inferences from premises not known to be true. An assertion that represents things as they really are, is a truth—an assertion that represents things as in reality they are *not*, is a falsehood. Truth, in sculpture, means an exact similitude of some living form, chiselled in stone or marble. Truth, in painting, is a natural representation on canvas, or otherwise, of some person or object. In the same manner, moral truth is an exact image of things set forth in speech or writing. The logical definition of truth is given in these words:—'Truth is that which admits of proof,' that is, an assertion or denial which can be substantiated by facts.

Tyranny, says Cobbett, has no enemy so formidable as the pen. Why? 'Because the pen pursues tyranny both in life and beyond the grave.' How is it proved to be the most formidable enemy of tyranny? From the fact that tyranny has no enemy so formidable as that which assails not only its existence, but its reputation, which may pursue it in life and beyond the grave. Such interrogatories and replies generate the syllogistic form thus:—

1. Tyranny has no enemy so formidable as that which may assail not only its existence, but its reputation, which may pursue it in life and beyond the grave.

2. The pen may pursue tyranny in life and beyond the grave.

3. Therefore, tyranny has no enemy so formidable as the pen.

Syllogism need not begin with a universal proposition. But care must be taken not to draw an infinite conclusion from finite premises.

In the following syllogism the chief proposition is limited:

Aristides was virtuous,
Aristides was a pagan,
therefore
Some pagan was virtuous.

The inference is limited. The proof is that some one pagan was virtuous.

Induction—a mode of logic which Bacon established—means reasoning from facts. A proposition is concluded to be true when the number of facts relevant to it and in favour of it greatly exceed all the known facts against it. But the quality of the facts as well as the number must be carefully weighed. When a lady once consulted Dr Johnson on the degree of turpitude to be attached to her son's robbing an orchard—'Madam,' said Johnson, 'it all depends upon the weight of the boy. I remember my schoolfellow, Davy Garrick, who was always a little fellow, robbing a dozen orchards with impunity, but the very first time I climbed up an apple tree, for I was always a heavy boy, the bough broke with me, and it was called a judgment. I suppose that is why Justice is represented with a pair of scales.' This may not be the precise reason why Justice has a pair of scales, but the point goes to the root of the matter. Without weighing there can be neither justice nor fair induction. When Ali Pacha was at Janina, the case of a poor woman, who accused a man of the theft of all her property, was brought before him; but the woman having no witnesses, the case was discharged, as the man asserted his innocence, and insisted, as a proof, that he had not a farthing in the world. On their leaving his presence, Ali ordered both to be weighed, and then released them without further notice. A fortnight afterwards he commanded both into his presence, and again weighed them; the woman had lost as much as the man had gained in weight, and Ali decided that the accusation was just. Ali Pacha was the

Burlamiqui of justice; Burlamiqui was a writer on logic, who insisted on attention being given to the preponderance of relevant facts.

In the case of the Leigh Peerage a number of witnesses were examined in the House of Lords as to the existence of a certain monument in Stonely Church—'The first witness described the monument as being black; the second spoke of it as a kind of dove-colour; the third said it was black and white; the fourth said it was originally white, but dirty, when he saw it; the fifth, differing from the others, said it was blue; the next witness described it as a light marble, but said it had a dark appearance as if it had been bronzed; and the last witness spoke of it as being of a light grey colour. Then, as to the form of the monument, the first witness said it was oblong; the next said it was square at the top, and came down narrower to the bottom, and there rested on a single truss; the third witness described it as being square at the bottom, resting upon two trusses, and went up narrower and narrower to a point at the top; the fourth witness said it was angular at the top; the next said it was square at the bottom, was brought to a point in the middle, and was then curved into a sort of festoon; the sixth witness stated that it was square at the top and bottom, and had a curve; and the last said it was square at the top and bottom. As to the language of the inscriptions, the first witness stated that the names of Thomas and Christopher Leigh were in English; the next said the inscription was not in English; the third said there was a great deal in English; the fourth witness said the whole (with the exception of the name Christopher Leigh) was in a language which he did not understand; the next witness stated that the inscription was all in English, except the words *Anno Domini*; and the last witness said it was not in English.'

All these witnesses agree as to the fact in dispute, but their variances in testimony illustrate the common inattention of observation and indistinctness of memory; and this case

further admonishes us that if such differences may exist as to a question of fact, little wonder that differences exist as to matters of opinion, where intellectual capacity and information are so various.

If a man looks well to the truth of the premises from which he reasons, he will never go far wrong. When Pope, in a moment of aberration, wrote,—

> Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside,

it only wants common sense—and not much of that—to see that if all men act on this advice, no one will ever try a new thing or leave off an old one, and the world would stand still.

A few years ago, a distinguished clergyman of the Universalist denomination was accused, while in Lowell, of 'violently dragging his wife from a revival meeting, and compelling her to go home with him.' He replied: 'Firstly, I have never attempted to influence my wife in her views, nor her choice of a meeting; secondly, my wife has not attended any of the revival meetings for any purpose whatever; thirdly, I never on any occasion forbade my wife to attend a revival meeting; fourthly, neither my wife nor myself have any inclination to attend those meetings; and fifthly, I never had a wife.'

This is a fair example of confutation without creating satisfaction. The clergyman gave a technical answer. The questioner assumed that the lady they had in their minds was his wife. She may have been his sister, or niece, or housekeeper, or relative in his house, over whom he had control—and used it. He would have been more instructive and given more satisfaction had he denied having interfered or sought to control anyone attending the meeting in question. Though he had 'no desire to attend' such place, he may have been there all the same. He merely fenced with his reply, which is clever but not creditable.

Imagine a tramcar director, waited upon by persons who

want to know whether the new car would leave at the usual time, and take up passengers at the usual places, who should answer :—Firstly, we have no 'new car,' and never had; secondly, we do not leave at the 'usual time'; thirdly, we do not 'take up passengers,' that is the business of the police; fourthly, we have no 'usual places.' This would be a good technical reply of the official type. But having regard to the interests of the company, he would explain that they had taken over the rolling stock of another company, and had built no 'new car' themselves; the 'usual time' was now a quarter of an hour earlier; that passengers 'step up' into the car, are not 'taken up'; and that they now stop for passengers wherever hailed. The representative of an interest is communicative and explanatory, why not the representative of truth?

The schoolmen, by teaching that logic has only to do with inferences, and that if the inference is true, the thing reasoned upon has to be accepted, have caused great superstitions to have long life in the world. He who begins to reason without knowing what from, is trying to get a living inference out of dead premises. Be sure your premises are alive, or your inferences will smell like stale fish, when brought into the market of debate.

Man should begin with himself. He loves truth—it is the first impulse of his nature. He loves justice—the bandit on the throne, as well as the bandit in the forest, respects justice in some form or other. Man loves cheerfulness—it is the attribute of innocence and courage. He loves fraternity—it knits society together in brotherhood. These are standards in the mind of him who thinks. His codes of life and judgment arise therefrom. That which accords with these principles is *reasonable*. Whatever develops these principles in conduct is *moral*. These sentiments are to be confirmed by his own observations. His experience in connection with these rules is the light with which he may examine religions, creeds, books, systems, opinions.

Pope, one of the few poets who had logic in his bones, writes:—

> Say first of God above or man below,
> What can we reason but from what we know?

Definition is the soul of argument, and therefore attention must be paid to it. Definition originates in accurate and comprehensive observation. 'There cannot be,' says Mill, 'agreement about the definition of a thing, until there is agreement about the thing itself. *To define a thing is to select from among the whole of its properties those which shall be understood to be designated and declared by its name;* and the properties must be very well known to us before we can be competent to determine which of them are fittest to be chosen for this purpose.'

To define a thing, says Dr Watts, we must 'ascertain with what it agrees, then note the most remarkable attribute of difference, and join the two together.' In fact, a valid definition selects that particular in which the thing in question differs from every other. So that it cannot be confounded with any other.

Every man of common sense can tell upon reflection what course of conduct would be useful if all men followed it. At least, in affairs of daily life men can tell this, and in affairs of public life considering the effect of a thing upon society is a good guide. Dumont puts this very clearly in the following questions:—

'What is it to give a good reason for a law? It is to show the good and the evil which that law tends to produce; so much good, so much argument in its favour; so much evil, so much argument against it.'

'What is it to give a bad reason? It is to allege for or against a law, any other thing than its effects, whether good or evil.'

'Nothing more simple; yet nothing more new.' It is not the principle of utility which is new; on the contrary, it is of

necessity as ancient as the race of man. Whatever there is of truth in morals, whatever there is of good in law, proceeds from this principle.'

There are five things which young logicians mistake for reasons:—(1) Antiquity of a thing is not a reason, because mankind were never infallible. (2) Religious authority is not a reason, for in every nation it has often been in the wrong. (3) Disowning innovation is not a reason, for to reject all innovation is to reject all improvement. (4) Arbitrary definition is not a reason, for using a word in a sense it has not been used in before, it bewilders the reader or hearer by an appearance of depth and subtlety which is unreal. (5) Metaphor or analogy is not a reason, they illustrate an argument but do not make one.

There are three maxims in law which may be usefully remembered in reasoning:—(1) Words spoken of one thing ought not to be perverted to another. (2) He who does not truly speak the truth is a betrayer of truth. (3) Contradictions cannot be brought into being.

CHAPTER VII

DELIVERY

DELIVERY relates primarily to ease, audibility, and expressiveness of speaking. Expressiveness includes fervour and gesture. But fervour and gesture belong to natural passion rather than to care and skill.

Delivery is a carrier's term, and sounds too mechanical for elocution; nevertheless, a speech is a delivery of information or incentive, and the manner of it is important. Delivery is, in fact, elocution in practice. Vigorous, sonorous delivery is called declamation. The speech of Brutus, defending the assassination of Cæsar, or that of Anthony denouncing it, are declaimed on the stage. Declamation is also applied to speech pompously spoken without adequate force of sense—to propositions daring in sound but meek in proof. Oriental speech is generally graceful and fascinating declamation — ornament without profit. Paul's famous declamation on charity includes no reason *why* anyone should have charity. Many contrive to do very well without it. Its beauty, its eminence as a virtue, the apostle excels in setting forth. It remained for Richard Hooker sixteen centuries later to show how much more any man needs the charity of all men, than that all men need the charity of any one man, and that it is therefore prudent to establish a claim to the good-will of the world by showing good-will towards it. This is the reason which commends charity as a civil policy, were it not a principle of justice.

So much describes declamation intrinsically as regards matter. As respects manner, declamation means the loud, vigorous, impetuous utterance of resounding sentences. But force in delivery may be obtained in other ways—where there is mind behind the words.

The Rev. Robert Hall, whose talent for speaking was such that, when eleven years old, he was set up to preach *extempore* to a select auditory of full-grown men, says of himself: 'To me to speak slow was ruin. You know, sir, that force or momentum is conjointly as the body and the velocity; therefore, as my voice is feeble, what is wanted in body must be made up in velocity.' This is a mathematical figure of speech, and is more true of dynamics than rhetoric. Hall's remark has misled many young speakers. Unless there is strength of voice to sustain the momentum imparted, indistinctness and alternations of screechings and whispers will be the result.

Some years ago, we had in Parliament a momentum speaker of no mean repute. It is said of Mr Macaulay (I think by Francis, in his *Orators of the Age*), that when an opening is made in a discussion in the House of Commons, he rises, or rather darts up from his seat, and plunges at once into the very heart of his subject without exordium or apologetic preface. In fact, you have for a few seconds a high-pitched voice, monotonous and rather shrill, pouring forth words with inconceivable velocity ere you have become aware that a new speaker, and one of no common order, has broken in upon the debate. A few seconds more and cheers, perhaps from all parts of the house, rouse you completely from your apathy, compelling you to follow that extremely voluble and not very enticing voice in its rapid course through the subject on which the speaker is entering, with a resolute determination, as it seems, never to pause. You think of an express train which does not stop even at the chief stations. On, on Macaulay speeds, in full reliance on his own momentum, never stopping for words, never stopping for

thoughts, never halting for an instant even to take breath, his intellect gathering new vigour as it proceeds, hauling the subject after him and all its possible attributes and illustrations, with the strength of a giant, leaving a line of light on the pathway his mind has trod, till, unexhausted and apparently inexhaustible, he brings his remarkable effort to a close by a peroration so highly sustained in its declamatory power, so abounding in illustration, so admirably framed to crown and clench the whole oration, that surprise, if it has even begun to wear off, kindles anew, and the hearer is left prostrate by the whirlwind of ideas and emotions which has swept over him. A man may take this liberty with elocution if he has genius to compensate for it. That member must beware who attempts to charm the House of Commons by a monotonous tone without Macaulay's wit, his power of enlightenment and amazing fecundity of illustration.

In some persons real power of speaking is marred by a physical peculiarity, as in the case of the late Lord Derby, which cannot be overcome by any device. A weak voice may be made stronger by exercise; stammering may be mitigated as it is said Demosthenes did in his case, by declaiming with stones in his mouth; but a husky voice is incorrigible.

Lord Rosebery remarks of Pitt that 'unfriendly critics said that his voice sounded as if he had worsted in his mouth; but the general testimony is that it was rich and sonorous.' Pitt's voice when animated rose to sonorousness, but he must have had worsted moments. Not even 'unfriendly critics' would invent a peculiarity which would be confuted five nights a week. Such a voice is not a defect of oratory; where it exists, it is a defect of nature—still a disadvantage. Mr Goschen speaks as though he had once been a pedlar of worsted, and had accidentally swallowed a ball; or had suffered from a cold in the throat when young, and the flannel intended to encase it had been inadvertently put inside instead of out. This filamentariness of speech im-

parts a woollen effect to many wise things he says. There are times when Mr Goschen's impassioned tones expand into the volume of the fog-horn, when their impressiveness effaces all sense of defect.

Others have natural advantages. Lord Coleridge had deliberateness of speech, and, like Lord Westbury, was unresting and unerring in his choice of terms. When Lord Coleridge, then Sir John Duke Coleridge, first spoke in the Commons, his tones filled the House with the silvery accents of a lute. Sir John Bowring says, 'The Chinese shoot arrows to which a musical pipe is attached, and when launched, sing in the air.' That describes Lord Coleridge's sentences.

Some orators of mark on the political platform suffer their voice to fall at the closing words of a sentence—though in the last words lie the whole point they intend. Great is the disappointment of hearers who lose interest in an argument incompletely made known to them. The cleverer a speaker is the more surely the sting of his meaning will be in the tail of sentences of importance. What does he speak for save to make that word clear? Yet he will drop his voice just there. Just as a man seldom writes his own name plainly because, knowing it himself, he concludes all other persons know it. Yet a proper name obscurely written, like an argument whose culmination is undisclosed, no one can certainly make out. This negligence in speaking is counted defective elocution. There is a vanishing point in art, but none in sentences.

Droll misapprehensions through indistinctness of utterance or neglect of emphasis, are familiar to every reader. There is the case of the archdeacon, whose housemaid gave notice to leave because she was held up to detestation every day in the morning prayers. The archdeacon read with the slovenly indistinctness common with some Churchmen, the words, 'O Lord, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made,' sounded thus: 'O Lord, who hatest nothing *but the shoue*

maid; and *slave* with her honest red elbows, said she would stand it no longer.

A clergyman, who denied that emphasis was proper in the pulpit, one day found his mistake by the smiles of his congregation, on his reading the text, 'And he spake to his sons, saying; "Saddle *me*, the ass, and they saddled *him*."' He would have made the meaning clear had he, instead of 'saddled him,' said 'saddled the ass.' A man whom he reprimanded for swearing, replied that he did not see any harm in it. 'No harm in it?' said the minister. 'Why, do you not know the commandment "Swear not at *all*?"' 'I do not swear at *all*,' said the man, 'I only swear at those who annoy me.'

The emphasis which is suggested by the sense is the best guide. Let a person make sure of the sense and his emphasis will be natural and varied. By natural is meant giving the chief force to those words upon which the meaning turns. For instance, in so simple a phrase as 'Come here.' If you wanted the person to come, and he would not, the speaker would throw a tone of entreaty into the word *come:* but if the person spoken to did not understand where he was to come to, and the speaker wanted him where he stood, he would put distinctness and force into the word *here.* But more of this in another chapter. 'Sufficient unto the *place*—is the evil thereof.'

Attracted by the pretensions of a placard, adorned by a testimonial from the *Times*, I went, in Glasgow, to hear some professional recitations. One of them was the 'Story of a Broken Heart.' The unfortunate girl, of whom it was told, did not die immediately, but it struck me she would have done so had she heard Mr Wilson recite her story. The subject was that piece of graceful effeminacy, in which Washington Irving has told the story of the proud love of the daughter of Curran for the unhappy and heroic Emmet.

No one can recite with propriety what he does not feel, and the key to gesture as well as to modulation is earnest-

ness. No actor can portray character with truth unless he can realise it, and he can only realise it by conceiving it for a time his own. It is said of one of the Kembles that his daughter had been forbidden to marry an actor, and her father was inexorable at her disobedience; but after he had seen her husband upon the stage, he relented, and forgave her with this observation, 'Well, well! I see you have not disobeyed me after all; for the man is not, and never will be, an actor.'

The prompting of Lucio to Isabel, when pleading before Angelo for the life of her brother, as rendered by Shakespeare in 'Measure for Measure,' is one of the happiest practical lessons in the art of persuasion on record. As a piece of perceptive teaching, neither the rhetoric of modern or of ancient times, so far as I have knowledge, has produced anything so wise, so concise, and yet so comprehensive, as Hamlet's directions to his players. It is a manual of delivery in miniature.

Do manners matter? is a question a public speaker should put to himself. In social life, those who affect to despise manners as too superfine for persons of their manly taste, forget that every man has manners—good or bad. A good manner is but art in doing what you have to do with consideration for others. A tone means much. Even laughter is an art. Some women laugh like joy. Some laugh like a peal of bells. Others laugh and you feel worse for having heard them. Is there such a thing as *tone* in the world? One would think not when we hear men cry 'Matter not manner.' A man shall hate his friend, not for what he says but for the imperious tone in which he says it. How many malevolent purposes have been changed by a kindly spoken word; how many hearts have been broken by unkind tones.

There are tones, whatever their purport may be, so enchanting that no ear would willingly forget them. Yet tone is a matter of manner. All manner is but policy in the

sense of being a chosen line of action. Manner is the half of life. Without some refinement of manner life would not be worth having. Dress to the gentleman, skill to the workman, discipline to the soldier, knowledge to all—is manner. Grammar is manner of speech; poetry is manner of expression; rhetoric is the manner of the passions; art the manner of genius.

Daily watchfulness in speech is of the greatest importance. Ordinary conversation should be well and clearly spoken—whether a question, an answer, or an anecdote; every word should be carefully said. Lord Wolseley wisely counselled English officers in command of Zulu or Indian troops, not to conclude that they were stupid or wilful because they disobeyed orders, unless they were quite sure the soldiers understood what was said to them. The stupidity might be on the part of the officer who was incapable of making himself understood.

Habitually audible and accurate speech will make it easy to speak in public. What anyone does well in daily life, he will do well in public, and have confidence that he can do it well. Well or ill, everybody is making short speeches in business or conversation, and a public speech is but the expansion or multiplication of short speeches.

No one has a right to speak unless he has something to say, and he has no right to say it publicly unless it is publicly important, and what it is publicly important to say should be said so distinctly and audibly that the public present can hear it.

Deliberation in delivery is more difficult to acquire or maintain than in former times. The world has been hurried by railways. They have originated a murderous punctuality in order to accelerate business. More deaths occur at railway stations through hurry to arrive there, than on all the coaches by the old and tardy traffic.

Public meetings, as a rule, have neither order nor limit. Everybody is held to have a right to speak now a meeting

may number 30,000, as everyone had when a public meeting seldom numbered 300. Now, too many resolutions are proposed, too many speakers appear, and speaking is hurried.

Lord Palmerston was a speaker who knew the value of taking time. Once, at Tiverton, a vehement electoral opponent inquired whether he would give a plain answer to a plain question. To this Lord Palmerston assented. The question was—Would he vote for a Radical measure of reform? Palmerston at once answered: 'I will'—pausing, while the Liberals cheered—then adding, 'not,' whereupon the Conservatives applauded; waiting until they had done, Palmerston continued, 'tell you;' when the wily and evasive candidate retired amid laughter and distrust all round.

Without deliberateness, self-possession is unattainable, and self-possession alone sometimes makes the fortune of a speech; and if it does not, it conduces to the repute of the speaker.

I have seen Mr John Stuart Mill in the House of Commons pause in an argument until the sequence occurred to him. The House would wait, as Mill's words were chosen. I have noticed Lord John Russell pause when the word he wanted did not occur to him. One night his son, Lord Amberley, paused twice in a short, wise speech, for the same reason. Being acquainted with him, I congratulated him upon the promise he gave of being a Parliamentary speaker, through self-possession, and the courage which waited for accuracy. A speaker should provide less to say than he might say at his ordinary rate of speaking, so that he must fill the time allotted to him by more deliberation and emphasis. Between deliberate, full-toned, and energetic speaking, and feeble, indistinct and spiritless utterances, there is the difference of live and dead oratory. A certain energy in delivery—which prevents drawling, and a slowness that avoids whirling accents, or clipping half the sounds away, as hasty speaking does—are conditions of elocution. A speaker should take time to

utter well, speak trippingly without tripping. If anyone must be extreme, he had better be heavy than hasty. A slowness carried too far would produce tedium, but without a certain slowness there can be no distinctness, nor will there be time for the speaker to think and for the auditors to apprehend the speaker's meaning.

It could never be meant that people should rush through this world, seeing how many advantages wait on those who take time to consider before they precipitate themselves into action. Difficulties, which seem insuperable to the beginner, vanish before those who have the wisdom to observe Pope's rule :—

> Learn to speak slow—all other graces
> Will follow in their proper places.

The graces may not follow then, but slowness gives them a chance of doing it if they have a mind to. Nevertheless, deliberation is the beginning of power in speech. The limit of slowness is drawling. Without a certain energetic slowness there can be no certain effect, and seldom any effect at all.

One who knew the House of Commons well has said :—

'Fellows who have been the oracles of coteries from their birth—who have gone through the regular process of gold medals, senior wranglerships, and double firsts—who have nightly sat down amid tumultuous cheering in debating societies, and can harangue with an unruffled forehead and an unfaltering voice, from one end of a dinner-table to the other—who on all occasions have something to say, and can speak with fluency on what they know nothing about—no sooner rise in the House than their spells desert them. All their effrontery vanishes. Common-place ideas are rendered even more uninteresting by a monotonous delivery; and keenly alive, as even boobies are in those sacred walls, to the ridiculous—no one appears more thoroughly aware of his unexpected and astounding deficiencies than the orator himself. He regains his seat, hot and hard, sultry and stiff,

with a burning cheek and an icy hand—repressing his breath lest it should give evidence of an existence of which he is ashamed; and clenching his fist that the pressure may secretly convince him he has not as completely annihilated his stupid body as his false reputation.' *

This passage has discouraged more persons than it ought. If a man goes into Parliament to make a demonstration at sight he will commonly fail. But if he modestly gives it information, and speaks when a sense of duty comes over him, upon what he understands, he will succeed according to what is in him.

One who acquired great reputation for capacity, Thomas Paine, confesses that the world (when he first came to America) could not have persuaded him that he should be either a soldier or an author. 'If I had any talents for either,' he said, 'they were buried in me, and might have ever continued so had not the necessity of the times dragged and driven them into action.' He was unconscious of his powers, as most persons are; hence, trusting yourself to events is good. It is prudent in men not to guess their abilities, but determine them by enterprise and achievement. The first step to success is to try. There is no learning to swim without going into the water. Had Hamlet contemplated being an orator, his soliloquies would have run thus:—

> To spout, or not to spout, that is the question:
> Whether 'tis better for a shamefaced fellow
> (With voice unmusical and gesture awkward)
> To stand a mere spectator in this business,
> Or have a touch at Rhetoric? To speak—to spout
> No more; and by this effort, to say we end
> That bashfulness, that nervous trepidation
> Displayed in maiden speeches—'twere a consummation
> Devoutly to be wished. To read—to speechify
> Before folks—perhaps to fail: ay, there's the rub;
> For from that ill success what sneers may rise,

* *Young Duke*, by Disraeli.

Ere we have scrambled through the sad oration,
Must give us pause. 'Tis the same reason
That makes a novice stand in hesitation,
And gladly hide his own diminished head
Beneath some half-fledged orator's importance,
When he himself might his quietus make
By a mere recitation. Who could speeches hear,
Responded to with hearty acclamation,
And yet restrain himself from holding forth—
But for the dread of some unlucky failure,
Some unforeseen mistake—some frightful blunder—
Some vile pronunciation or inflection,
Improper emphasis or wry-necked period,
Which carping critics note, and raise the laugh,
Not to our credit—nor so soon forgot?
We muse on this! Then starts the pithy question:
Had we not best be mute, and hide our faults,
Than spout to publish them?

Spout and publish them without hesitation if you wish to cure them. Had Raphael feared to daub, he had never been Raphael of renown. Had Canova feared to torture marble, he had never been a sculptor. Had Edmund Kean feared to spout, he had never been an actor regarded as next to Garrick. If you stammer like Demosthenes, or stutter like Curran, speak on. He who hesitates to hesitate will always hesitate.

CHAPTER VIII

GESTURE MEASURED BY CONVICTION.

As genius in ideas will compensate for the neglect of elocutionary art in utterance, so earnestness and commanding thought will produce eloquence of effect without gesture in delivery. At the same time, fitting gesture, which grows out of personal animation, is an advantage. To underdo it, rather than overdo it, is a safe rule. If the arm moves from the shoulder, rather than from the elbow, angularity of action, which is never well received, will be avoided. It is better to commence a speech with moderate action and leave it to the natural fervour of conviction to augment it.

As a rule, a chaste, concise and energetic style is more effective than a florid, turgid and prolix one; so the judicious employment of moderate gesture is more effective upon the taste of the English people, who love moderation, than any possible amplification of spasmodic attitudes or redundancy of facial changes. He who commences with moderate gesture may increase it without danger of falling into exaggeration, while he who begins with affluence of action exhausts his resources of motion before the moment for supreme effect arrives.

Robert Hall had no oratorical action, scarcely any kind of motion, excepting an occasional lifting or waving of the right hand; and in his most impassioned moments only an alternate retreat and advance in the pulpit by a short

step. Nor had W. J. Fox much gesture. His hands were crossed before him. One or other arm was raised (I do not remember to have seen both raised at once) and pointed towards, rather than at, the audience. The action seemed more effective from its moderation. Mr Bright had impressive gestures, which were moderately used. Mr Gladstone's striking and animated gestures are one of the charms of his oratory. Gambetta was a master of gesture: but it was slow, imposing, sustained by his mighty voice and well-chosen words. He excelled in vigorous sentences, which no compeer could express with like luminousness. His gestures illustrated his sense; they were not, as with many animated speakers, a substitute for sense.

Sincerity is not always elegance, nor is earnestness always grace; nevertheless, earnestness is the best schoolmaster of gesture. Awkwardness and angularity of movement is forgiven to the sincere. In some, grace of gesture comes by nature, some acquire it by dancing. Grace mostly comes by training, but those who have it not should confine themselves to few motions. Awkwardness will not be so apparent then. Besides, there is another compensation—a little gesture goes a long way when there is manifest conviction behind it. However, gesture is but the outward and visible ornament of inward sources of effectiveness. To venture upon imitating Italian or French gesture, the speaker needs Italian grace and French animation.

CHAPTER IX

CONDITIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS

BESIDES the effectiveness which relates to manner of delivery, there is the effectiveness which depends upon the mind. Effectiveness is the aim of oratory. So far as it can be compassed—it can be compassed more or less by calculation in statement. There may be effectiveness without calculation, and effects unpremeditated are sometimes marvellous. But a wise speaker does not depend on chance—his strength is to foreknow. Manifest sincerity in speech may be depended upon to create a good impression on an audience. Earnestness is a quality which on the platform might degenerate into emotionalism, which, lacking self-possession, would be fatal to public effect. Sincerity is a manly, self-contained sentiment, less pretentious than earnestness. Nevertheless, earnestness, when good sense controls it, is a noble quality. Yet not even sincerity is everything. It does not imply the truth of what is said. That still requires to be proved. Some think sincerity is errorless. Once everybody, save a few philosophers, believed it to be a sign of truth. Robespierre was sincere: he was a man who made sincerity terrible. Some of his speeches, not all, read like a murder. There was a guillotine in them. His sentences dripped with blood. No genius, no talent, no sincerity is to be trusted or praised—unless it conduces, and is intended to conduce, to the welfare of others.

Nevertheless, with all its limitations, sincerity and capacity annihilate personal disadvantages. I knew a rotund orator, who appeared on the platform as Charles James Fox must have appeared in Pitt's days—like a sugar hogshead on two props, yet upon whom the audience looked with admiration while he spoke. Louis Blanc was diminutive in stature, but he was so entirely a man, and his speaking was so sonorous, pregnant and animated, that his small stature seemed an advantage to him. Robert Hall was a preacher who had ideas, as well as precision and energy of style, yet the spiritual and intrinsic charm of his speech was its earnestness. Foster said of Hall, 'Truth (to him) was a universal element, and to enforce its claims was his constant aim. Whether he attempted to engage the reason, the affections, or the fancy, all was subsidiary to this end. He was always in earnest,' as to the necessity of discerning truth, explaining it, and vindicating it.

Effectiveness lies also in proportion. Not in the beauty of a pillar, or the finish of a frieze, but in the commandingness which the whole building has over the spectator—not in the brilliance of a passage, but in the coherence of the whole lies the effectiveness of a speech or a book.

One conspicuous element of force is a defined purpose. Better say nothing than not to the purpose. No part should attract the main attention entirely to itself. The chief merit of any part is its subserviency to the whole design. When parts are praised, a speaker is said to have brilliance; when the whole impresses, he is said to have power. In a speech, as in a drawing on a reduced scale, all the proportions have to be there. If a subject is too extensive for an ordinary speech, present a distinct portion which shows the quality of the whole. Hierocles carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen of the house he wanted to sell. It gave no idea of its situation, or convenience, but it proved his confidence in the quality of its material.

Lucidity of arrangement is intent made evident to an

assembly, and is no mean element of effectiveness. As reasoning proceeds from axioms which cannot be lost sight of without confusion—so an argumentative speech has a foregone object which must be disclosed to the hearers, or they will be unable to follow the speaker intelligently. The *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* has explained clearly the advantages of this course in the following terms:—

'In purely argumentative statement, or in the argumentative division of mixed statements, and especially in argumentative speeches, it is essential that the issue to be proved should be distinctly announced in the beginning, in order that the tenour and drift that way of everything that is said may be the better apprehended; and it is also useful, when the chain of argument is long, to give a forecast of the principle bearings and junctures, whereby the attention will be more easily secured and pertinently directed throughout the more closely consecutive detail, and each proposition of the series will be clenched in the memory by its foreknown relevancy to what is to follow.'

These are well-known rules, which it were superfluous to cite, except for the instruction of the young. But examples may be occasionally observed of juvenile orators who will conceal the end they aim at until they have led their hearers through the long chain of antecedents, in order that they may produce surprise by forcing a sudden acknowledgment of what had not been foreseen. The disadvantage of this method is that the hearer is apt to resent being trapped into assent. It puzzles and provokes the hearer during its statement, confounds him in the conclusion, and gives an overcharged impression of the orator's ingenuity on the part of those who may have attended to him sufficiently to have been convinced. It is a method by which the business of the argument is sacrificed to ostentation in the conduct of it, and the ease and satisfaction of the auditors sacrificed to the vanity of the arguer. The novelist or dramatist will often conceal the secret of his plot to allure the reader to

the end, and take him by surprise then, if he can. In that case the story has to be entertaining up to that point, or the reader will not hold on till he reaches it. Unless a speaker is sure of enchanting his audience as he goes along, hearers will not wait for the point of his argument, which has been concealed from them. Besides, there is this difference between a novel and an argument. The novel is intended to amuse, the argument to convince, and when a link is lost, by ignorance of its relevance, the chain of proof is disconnected.

Yet though the aim of an argument must be divulged, the drift of an illustration, if brief, may be kept back. In one of the Anti-Corn-Law orations of W. J. Fox in Covent Garden Theatre, there occurred a striking example of this. He commenced by stating the case of certain poachers, related in the newspapers of that day, who had been sentenced at Ashby-de-la-Zouch to considerable terms of imprisonment. When to this punishment was added the loss and privation to which the families of the prisoners were subjected, the penalty was serious. No one foresaw the relevance of the story, but which the orator did not long withhold. He demanded to know 'if this shall be done to the poor man who steals the rich man's bird, what shall be done to the rich man who steals the poor man's bread?' I know of no first words of any speech which produced so great an effect. The argument was as a match applied to a funeral pyre where the fallacies of protection were burned before the eyes of the meeting.

An appeal to experience is a force in due place. 'The argument,' says Emerson, 'which has not the power to reach my own practice, I may well doubt will fail to reach yours. I have heard an experienced counsellor say, that he never feared the effect upon a jury of a lawyer who does not believe in his heart that his client ought to have a verdict.' Samuel Bailey, in his *Review of Berkeley's 'Theory of Vision,'* says:—

'Many years ago, I held what may be styled a derivative opinion in favour of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*, but having in the course of a philosophical discussion had occasion to explain it, I found, on attempting to state in my own language the grounds on which it rested, that they no longer appeared to me to be so clear and conclusive as I had fancied them to be. I determined to make it the subject of a patient and dispassionate examination. The result has been a clear conviction in my own mind of its erroneousness, and a desire to state to the philosophical world the grounds on which that conviction has been formed.'

This is an interesting instance of the truth of the observation that that statement only is fit to be made public which you have come at in attempting to satisfy your own understanding.

An editor of Shelley's posthumous poems apologises for the publication of some fragments in a very incomplete state, by remarking, 'how much more than every other poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with beauty.' Let no man sit down to write with the purpose of making every line and word beautiful and peculiar. Sir Henry Taylor thought 'the only effect of such an endeavour will be to corrupt the judgment and confound the understanding.'

Augustine Birrell, in a criticism wise in a new way, like many other criticisms of his, remarks that 'Emerson writes like an electrical cat, emitting sparks and shocks in every sentence. The lights irradiate the forest, but disclose no path.' The same critic explains what many have felt.

'You never know what Emerson will be at. His sentences fall over you in glittering cascades, beautiful and bright, and for the moment refreshing. But after a very brief while the mind, having nothing to do on its own account but to remain wide open and see what Emerson will send it, grows first restive and then torpid. Admiration

gives way to astonishment, astonishment to bewilderment, and bewilderment to stupefaction.'

As a rule, men are not much in danger of being too brilliant. Happily for orators, occasional phrases of power are sufficient for effect and reputation. Brightness and force are attainable by him who, knowing what he wishes to say, knows *why* it should be said. Telling the audience the reason which has convinced the speaker is that explanation which produces impression. It fulfils Mr J. R. Green's rule—'it takes the public into the speaker's confidence, who are addressed as though they knew as much as the speaker himself.' An orator will be all the more explanatory, interesting and engaging, if he assumes in his own mind that his hearers know nothing upon the subject. A painting all white or all black allures no eye. It is light and shade that make the picture. A fixed beacon light is not seen at sea as far, nor as well, as a revolving light.

To speak, study simplicity; abjure affectation and be natural. The natural voice is heard the farthest, and the natural effects the soonest. 'The costly charm of the ancient tragedy is that the persons speak simply, speak as persons who have great good sense without knowing it.' Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing. Sincerity and simplicity carry all before them. On Thiers's first appearance in the French Chamber he experienced an almost universally unfavourable reception. He was diminutive, with an expression of countenance—though intellectual, reflective and sarcastic—far from possessing beauty. The face itself, small in form, was encumbered with a pair of spectacles so large that, when peering over the marble edge of the long narrow tribune whence all speakers address the Chamber, he was described as appearing suspended to the two orbs of crystal. With such an exterior M. Thiers, full of the impassioned eloquence of his favourite revolutionary orators, sought to impart those thrilling emotions recorded of Mirabeau. The attempt pro

voked derision, but only for a time. In his new sphere, as in the others he had passed through, he soon outshone competition. Subsiding into the oratory natural to him—simple, vigorous and rapid, he proved himself one of the most formidable of Parliamentary champions.

Have a clear meaning and never obscure it. A wit may leave his words open to two interpretations if he intends to amuse and not to deceive. Dryden, a great poet, and Otway a poet also, but of lesser magnitude, lived in the same street, in houses facing each other. One morning Otway wrote in chalk on Dryden's door the line :—

Here lives Dryden, a poet and a wit.

Dryden, on coming out, saw it, and wrote underneath it :—

Written by Otway opposite.

It has never been settled to this day whether Dryden meant merely to say that the line of praise his neighbours would see written on his own door about him, was not written by himself—but written by a person living opposite; or that Otway was the *opposite* of 'a poet and a wit.'

But in matters of moment, which will affect themselves and others, men like to know, and have a right to demand, with General Ludlow, that a speaker's words shall not only be such as can be understood, but such as cannot possibly be misunderstood.

For effectiveness in speech or writing, keep clear of philosophical fogginess and common-place sentiment. Avoid as far as possible abstract terms, abstract questions, and abstract ideas. Keep to palpable things, and such as pass before the auditors in daily life. It is very well to entertain Utopian ideas—it implies an outside mind; but it is not convincing to act altogether on Utopian principles till you are in Utopia.

Beware of the transition epoch in argument, so common and so false, by which so many alarm the public at what

they call the decay of faith, which is being superseded by the evolution of higher truth. Transition is no new thing; it has been going on ever since time began. Transition is the step of ceaseless progress. Its determined and tireless tread is heard in every epoch. Transition is the change-bringer of time. The hills, the ocean, the climate, society, men and creeds are changing hourly and always. It is an open question whether a particular change is good or bad. It is reasonable to reason about it. But to talk of the present time as one of transition, which the speaker has found out, is no novelty of discovery. It is older than the mountains. Transition is eternal.

Men so well-informed, and so self-conscious of infallibility as Carlyle was, could say in the days passing over him, 'Few men have seen more impressive days of endless calamity, disruption, dislocation, confusion worse confounded. If they are not days of endless hope too, then they are days of utter despair.' Public men, priests and politicians before the days of Noah, and ever since, have said the same thing. It is the common jargon of Parliament. I have seen the sun of England set for ever annually for sixty years, according to the predictions of our political Cassandras. It weakens public respect for a man's judgment to hear him talk thus. Foolishness destroys effectiveness.

No more should be said at any time than can be said well. Brevity is the instinct of art. If anything is prolonged it must be varied and perfect in every part. It is a mistake to try to say everything which can be said upon a subject. Confine yourself to so much as will make a distinct impression. Enough is as good as a feast and better, and too much is worse than a fast.

Against multitudes of words the poets have given many warnings. One who knew exclaims:—

> 'Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
> Much fruit of sense beneath, is rarely found.

There are those who, like Talleyrand, regard words as given to us to conceal our meaning. But where the intention is to make things clear, we must give heed to Moore's suggestion—

> The wise men of Egypt were secret as dummies,
> And e'en when they most condescended to teach,
> They packed up their meaning, as they did their mummies,
> In so many wrappers, 'twas out of one's reach.

Co-operators ought to be good speakers; their study being economy, and economy in words is the source of effectiveness in speech. Economy is honourable in war. Wellington was a greater general than Napoleon, inasmuch as he compassed great effects with a smaller expenditure of men; as he is the greatest speaker who accomplishes conviction with the smallest number of words.

We can do without any article of luxury we never had, but when once obtained, it is not in human nature to surrender it voluntarily. Of twelve thousand clocks left on trial by Sam Slick, only ten were returned. 'We trust to soft sawder,' said Sam, 'to get them into the house, and to human nature that they never come out of it.' Yet how many persons expect to produce effects upon assemblies of men who never bestow half the time upon the study of their natures as was given by our American clock-seller.

The young speaker will do well to notice that morality is better understood, at least in theory, than in former days, and that the public like sincerity on the part of a speaker. A life which shall illustrate what the orator seeks to enforce will add materially to his influence. Some will ask—May not a recommendation be a good one though the giver of it be bad? Yes; but is it not an advantage when both are worthy? The public may accept good advice from men who will not take it themselves. But is it not the object of a wise rhetoric to increase the number of men

who act themselves on the advice they give? If the public should be composed of men who hear only and never practise, who does not see that we may give over all exhortations of amendment? Mankind reason that that which is good for the public is good for individuals, since individuals make up the public. And when it is seen that a man does not follow his own advice, it is concluded that either he is a simpleton, and consequently is not to be heeded, or that he is secretly conscious of some inapplicability in his own recommendations, and therefore to be suspected.

The moral existence of men is made up of a few trains of thought, which, from the cradle to the grave, are excited and re-excited again and again. These leading ideas rule despotically over conduct, and, whoever awakens these, influence those whom he addresses. It is in these leading ideas that we see the source of character. These features the rhetorician studies. When Napoleon in Egypt was threatened by his disaffected generals, he vanquished them by an appeal to three traits in their character — their pride, their honour and their bravery. Walking among them, he exclaimed: 'You are too many to assassinate me, and too few to intimidate me.' The fury of the men was subdued to admiration, and they turned away, exclaiming, 'Damn him, how brave he is.' It is said the heart has no avenue so open as that of flattery, which, like some enchantment, lays its guards asleep. But flattery which succeeds with the intelligent requires art. If honest, it is excellent. A famous politician, at a Royal Academy dinner, listening to insincere praise which others called 'clever,' he answered, 'I call it hellish.'

Youth should lay the foundation of eloquence in character and honesty. Let him speak for the right; let him not borrow the language of idle gentlemen or self-complacent scholars, much less that of sensualists, absorbed in greed of purse and palate; let him speak for the absent, defend the

friendless, the poor, the slave, the prisoner and the lost. Let him look upon opposition as opportunity; he is one who cannot be defeated or put down. Let him feel that it is not the people who are in fault for not being convinced but the speaker who cannot convince them.

CHAPTER X

LAWS OF DEBATE

DEBATE is a larger question than is generally understood. Every man is debating daily, either with himself or someone else. A man debates questions with his household or with friends. Whenever a difference of opinion arises oetween two persons, they instinctively debate it together. This term has, also, a public signification, and is applied to discussions in Parliament and formal debates on public platforms. Correspondence in newspapers, reviews and periodicals often takes the form of controversy. All forms of controversy, where one person seeks to justify his opinion against the differing opinion of another, is debate; for intellectual life is a perpetual discussion. Conversation is often a friendly debate. Error of idea is everywhere an antagonist

Some people are so disquieted by contrariety of opinion that they fear the fate of the Catholic and the Jew, who debated together the grounds of their faiths, and ended by the Jew becoming a Catholic and the Catholic a Jew. Some fear discussion because they are like the judge who said he understood a case when he had heard only one side—it was the other side which perplexed him. The risk of this perplexity he must undergo who would be wise.

Before taking part in debate, a man has to vindicate to himself the uses of debate.

1. It creates two-sided people.

2. It instils toleration.
3. It proves truth which may be trusted.
4. It puts into the mind the sense of reasoned truth.
5. It sows the seeds of new truth.

Those who object to these things may as well keep clear of debate, for they will misuse it and distrust it.

The first rules to be observed in taking part in debate is:—

1. To state your case.
2. To clear your case.
3. To prove your case.
4. And then sit down.

There was once an old doctor, the lecturer on logic and rhetoric at a Scotch university, who received the fees from the pupils on entering, who used to say to them, when they had finished their term, that there were only two rules to follow—'One is, when you have anything to say, say it in as few words as you can; the other, when you've said it, hold your tongue.'

General Ludlow held that a man should say what he means and mean what he says. This is as true in debate as in morals. In debate, you must not only say what you mean—but *know* what you mean. The audience will soon find out if you do not know it.

1. The speaker must state his case that the hearers may understand to what he asks their attention; without this information they cannot judge what his object is, nor tell when he is relevant or when he digresses. In stating your case give the other side of the case—if you know it. The contrast will make your meaning clear, and show that you know what your case is. There is a fine instance in the writings of Toulmin Smith*—'Decentralisation or administration by localities, is that system of government under which the greatest number of minds, knowing most about the special matter in hand, having the greatest opportunities of knowing about it, and having the greatest interests in its

* *Local Self-Government*, pp. 395 to 409.

well-working, have the management of it or control over it. Centralisation or administration by departments is that system of government under which the smallest number of minds, knowing the least about the special matter in hand, having the fewest opportunities of knowing about it, and having the smallest interest in its well-working, have the management of it or control over it.'

2. Then the speaker must clear his case—showing plainly what he is aiming at, making his question quite distinct, that it may not be mixed up with something likely to be advanced by another disputant. He must free his main terms from ambiguity, so that ignorance cannot mistake what he intends, nor an adversary pervert his meaning. On a certain occasion a witness said he knew the accused 'the moment he obtained a full-faced view of his back.' A back may have its peculiarities, but a 'full-faced' view of it is difficult to obtain. General Grant said of General Hancock that, sitting behind him, 'you knew when he was pleased, for you could see him laugh behind his ears.'. I have seen other Hancocks do this.

3. A speaker must next prove his case, so that the reasons of his argument may be evident. Here he should adduce facts which cannot well be disputed in support of his contention, and employ, if he can, such illustrations as make his meaning clearer.

4. Having done all he can to put the hearer in possession of his case—he gives place to his adversary within the allotted time—if the time be prescribed.

A barrister will occasionally state a complex case to the jury before him, beginning with the simplest circumstances, continuing with the more difficult, arranging the facts in such order that the series throw light on the most obscure points—that the whole case may be fully understood. When he feels this to be accomplished he returns, recapitulates, selects those points he wishes to have most weight, puts them before the jury freshly, prominently, and as forcibly

as he can. If his brief affords it, and he has no scruples, he can, like Charles Phillips, in his defence of Courvoisier for the murder of Lord William Russell, seek to fix the guilt on an innocent man; or, like Sir Fitzroy Kelly, shed tears to attest his belief that Tawell was innocent, whom he knew to be guilty. But he who does this loses evermore the confidence of those who know it.

In debate, it is a great point to have the main point in mind, and never to lose sight of it. An argument is like a picture which has a point to which all lines converge. It was O'Connell who said an orator should always know what he is aiming at, for when a man aims at nothing he is almost sure to hit it.

Young debating societies have a tendency not to know what the point is, and to wander from it when they do know it. Upon the chairman is cast the trouble of discerning what the main points are in the mind of the person who opens the debate, and if this has not been made clear to the chairman, he should ascertain what the main points meant to be debated are, and state them himself to the meeting before the discussion commences. Having once made the question unquestionably plain, he should remind every speaker of it who forgets it, and point out to him when he is wandering therefrom. But a chairman should not use much strictness in doing this, because some speakers cannot see a point, and cannot keep to it if they do. Therefore, if they were strictly called to order they would be incapable of speaking at all. But though it might be desirable, for the sake of affording young speakers practice, and of training a society in the habits of debate, to allow disputants to speak in the best way they can, the meeting should be incidentally kept informed when the question is getting mixed up with something else. In a debate, if speakers introduce irrelevant subjects, the good or evil of these different subjects will be entered upon. Other speakers arise and combat what other speakers have said upon these subjects,

and in less than half an hour hardly anybody remembers what the actual subject before the meeting was. Now, the business of disputants is to discuss the speech of the opener of the debate, rather than the speeches of each other. What other speakers say should be referred to only, or mainly, so far as it relates to the topic before the meeting. Discussion is excellent discipline in the art of discovering what a point is and what relates to it. Discussion is always valuable, inasmuch as it elicits contrariety of opinion that nobody could suspect, and misconceptions which nobody could imagine. No person can be said to entirely understand any subject until he has debated it with sharp-witted people. In the art of seeing all round a question, a night in a discussion room will do more for a man than a month in a library, that is, supposing the president has sufficient knowledge of the speakers before him to bring their various powers into play, and at the same time supposing that the speakers have powers which the president can elicit and bring into action.

No opponent should be accepted whose sincerity cannot be assumed, since it ought not to be questioned in debate. To give an adversary credit for good faith is economy in reasoning, since you have only to refute his principles—not himself—which leaves you all your time and force for the greater and more useful task. Find no fault with his grammar, manner, intentions, tone. Attend only to the matter. Hear all things without impatience and without manifest emotion. Let your opponent fully exhaust his matter. Encourage him to say whatever he thinks relevant. Many persons believe in the validity and magnitude of their positions, because they have never been permitted to state them to others—and when they have once delivered themselves of their opinions, they often find for the first time how insignificant they are. There are some persons whom nobody can confute but themselves. When you distinguish such, your proper business is to let them do it.

Learn to satisfy yourself and to present a conclusive statement of your opinions, and when you have done so, have the courage to abide by it. If you cannot trust your statement to be canvassed by others—if you feel anxious to add some additional remark at every step—suspect your knowledge of your own case and amend it on further reflection. Master as completely as you can your opponent's theories, and state his case with manifest fairness, and, if possible, state it with more force against yourself than your opponent did. The observance of this rule will teach you two things —your opponent's strength or weakness, and your own also. If you cannot state your opponent's case you do not know it, and if you do not know it you are not in a fit position to argue against it. If you dare not state your opponent's case in its greatest force, you feel it to be stronger than your own, and in that case you ought not to argue against it.

The course here suggested will be as useful to truth as to the disputant. Great prejudice may often be disarmed by daring it. In this manner, Gibbon delivered his argument in favour of an hereditary monarchy. 'Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in this world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice that establishes a rule of succession independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal power of giving themselves a master.'

In Gibbon's days the discovery of a removable master had not been made.

Debate should have for its object the vindication of some truth seriously disputed. The Dutchman, who regarded debate as a duty, being pressed as to the value of a dog for whose loss he had brought an action, said, 'Nothing; but let him pay for it.' When his adversary was asked whether it was true that he killed the dog, he said, 'To be sure I did, but let him *prove* it,' which was foolish, but not more silly than many disputants of pretension, who will dispute for disputation sake, where there is nothing real or useful to contend for.

For the adjustment of a difference a man should understate his case—should make no material assertion unaccompanied by the proof—make the fairest allowance for his rival's excitement (if he be excited), put a fair interpretation on his words and acts. All whose suffrages are worth having will make just judgment. The reason of so many departures from this rule is the want of courage, or the want of sense. It is the opinion of the ignorant that if a man does not bluster and retort, he is deficient in spirit. This apprehension often betrays weak men into violence, and to prove themselves independent they become rude and insolent—whereas courage pursues its own way without ostentation, preserves its independence, corrects misrepresentation, repairs any injury it may have unwittingly done, and answers slander (if there be slander) with the truth. No wise man answers a fool according to his folly. He shows that it *is* folly, and abandons it to die by its own hands.

Hamilton's *Parliamentary Logic* gives maxims, which that experienced tactician had treasured up, observed, or invented, many unworthy, some shrewd:—

'State what you censure by the soft names of those who would apologise for it.

'In putting a question to your adversary, let it be the last thing you say.

'Distinguish real from avowed reasons of a thing. This makes a fine and brilliant fund of argument.

'Upon every argument consider the misrepresentations which your opponent will probably make of it.

'If your case is too bad, call in aid the party: if the party is bad, call in aid the cause.*

'Nothing disgusts a popular assembly more than being apprised of your intention to speak long.'

Having had experience in the ways of adversaries—the unscrupulous and the fair—I noticed the rules they ordinarily followed, and found, as Wordsworth's little girl said of her brothers and sisters, 'We are seven,' which were these:—

1. To show that the objection made against what you mainly said is wrong, and that you were in the right. For this course to succeed one must be very clear upon the subject, and make it very clear to others that it is the objector alone who is in error. If this cannot be done, the matter requires some consideration.

2. Not to take any notice of the objection raised; but if he who advances it is a person whose opinion has weight, his objection will have force, and tell against you, whether you take notice of it, or not.

3. To notice the objection made, and affect to see nothing in it. But it is necessary to bear in mind that, if other people happen to see something in it, your alleged want of penetration will not serve you.

4. To admit there is 'something in it,' but maintain that it is a mere misapprehension of your meaning. In that case, you must explain what your meaning was, or that expedient will not answer.

5. To allege that your own statement is open to two distinct interpretations, and argue that your critic has

* 'If neither is good,' says Hamilton, 'wound your opponent,' which may be Parliamentary, but is discreditable in the speaker and a waste of public time.

adopted the wrong one. This course, however, is attended with some risk; since it is the duty of a speaker to be aware of double meanings, to choose one, and leave the hearer in no manner of doubt which sense was intended, and to fix that sense so that the meaning could not be intelligently misunderstood.

6. Admit that your statement was open to some objection, making light of it, giving the hearer the impression it was very unimportant, and that your critic could not have anything very serious on his mind to make so 'much ado about nothing'—by which means the unobservant hearer will be hardly sensible that you have fallen into any error at all, and even be disposed to regard the objector to what you have said, as a trivial and captious commentator. But the intelligent observer will distrust you.

7. The remaining course open is to admit frankly you were in the wrong. Careless phraseology, an inaccurate argument, or a conflicting statement (whether fallen into unawares or not), is an imposition upon the mind of the hearer, and a waste of language, since it weakens and obscures the proper argument. Therefore, the right thing is to express yourself under obligations to an auditor who pays you the great compliment of considering what you have said, and takes the trouble to amend what has been unwittingly left defective.

Persons, really honest-minded, do often find a difficulty in frankly admitting that they have made a mistake; but it is far better to cultivate the habit of admitting an error, which you see to be such, than to foolishly persist that you are right, and to persist in the foolishness of the mis-statement which everybody sees to be so, and which you ought to see yourself. To try to create the impression that you are never in error, is to pretend to infallibility—it is to pretend that you know everything, that you know it always, and that you are so perfect that you never forget it or overlook it. Everybody knows that there never was any person

of this description; and to pretend to be, or to imagine that you are, such a person is to betray to every reflecting reader that you are ignorant as well as conceited. A real lover of truth is glad to have any error into which he may have fallen pointed out, that he may avoid it in the future.

CHAPTER XI

PERSONALITIES THE DIGRESSIONS OF DEBATE

CONTROVERSY, though the pathway to truth and final test of it, is an unwelcome word in many ears. This is because it is so often protracted and unsatisfactory. It is protracted through digression, and unsatisfactory, being so often disfigured by personalities, which mainly cause digression and ill-feeling. Things evil, as well as things good, do not come by chance. Disease as well as health has its conditions; and personalities, however capricious and irregular they may seem, have their laws. St Jerome said: 'If an offence come out of the truth, better the offence come than that the truth be concealed.' There is no natural offence in truth. The offence is generally put into it by personalities, which cause digressions from the truth into hateful and dishonouring imputations.

The *Edinburgh News* lately turned to the file of London papers as they existed in the pure and happy days of a fourpenny stamp, and found a licence of speech quite edifying. Thus the *Times* calls its neighbour, the *Morning Chronicle*, 'that squirt of filthy water,' and the *Chronicle*, not to be behind, calls the *Post* 'that slop-pail of corruption.' The *Standard* describes the *Globe* as 'our blubber-head contemporary.' The *Morning Herald* accosts its neighbour, the *Courier*, as 'that spavined old hack,' while the *Morning Advertiser* hurls its wrath against the *Times* as 'that bully of

Berkshire and braggadocio of Printing House Square.' The *Times*, not to be outdone, commenced one of its leaders on the 13th of June 1835, with 'The Liberal liars,' and then turning on the *Chronicle*, continues, 'A disgraceful morning print, which actually feeds on falsehood and lies'; then going into the subject, it adds, 'The smaller rascal, Mr Gingall, copies the paragraph from the larger blackguard.' The *Times* of the same date, elsewhere referring to its opponent, says, 'The community must be shocked to know that there are such beings as these scribblers out of the treadmill, and because every exposure of the ragamuffins gives to foreigners an additional proof that there have crept into the press of this country a number of scoundrels, who not only are unfit for the society of gentlemen, but who would be a disgrace to the vilest *coteries* of Europe.' To this the *Standard* retorts, 'It can scarcely be doubted that the habits of writing down to the ignorance and below the brutality of the rabble, which the *Times* has acquired by long experience, acting, of course, upon original ignorance and intuitive brutality, has rendered this journal a more powerful organ of excitement than a whole workshop of railers.'

This was the way in which 'gentlemen wrote for gentlemen' in those days; and all agreed in one thing, that the abolition of the fourpenny stamp would lower the press, as though it could fall into a lower depth than that in which the fourpenny stamp writers burrowed. The press has been freed from all taxation, and the standard of the cheap press is far higher than in its dearest days. The working-class have found a better way of expression. Nevertheless, the political and ecclesiastical controversy of our 'betters' still presents samples of the old manner.

Literature has not always had a civil tongue in its head, and was ready to assist political animosity. Bute pensioned Dr Johnson and Dr Shebbeare, which caused the wits to say he had pensioned a He-bear and a She-bear. Dr Shebbeare

had been in the pillory and lost his ears, which was the point of these lines—

> Witness, ye Hills, ye Johnsons, Scots, Shebbeares,
> List to my call, for *some of you* have ears.

Byron and Shelley disagreed widely on several questions, but that made no difference in their regard for each other. Byron had hatreds—Shelley had fanaticisms. Vegetarianism was one. Byron did not hesitate to deny outright Shelley's cereal ideal. Byron sang—

> Man's a carnivorous production,
> And must have meals; at least one meal a day.
> He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
> But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey;
> Although his anatomical construction
> Bears vegetables in a grumbling way,
> Your labouring people think, beyond all question,
> Beef, veal and mutton better for digestion.

Shelley, walking down Bond Street, composing a poem and munching a new roll for his dinner, would be likely to produce dyspeptic verse that day. Shelley wrote no line of malice in reply to Byron. But then these poets were gentlemen.

One way to disarm personalities when they come is to brave them. To court them is fatal to yourself; to retaliate fatal to union. The partisan of a cause ought to be able to dare all opinions. And all opinions might be dared by those in the right. There can be no quarrel unless *two* parties engage in it. And it is always in the power of one party to make a quarrel difficult by refusing to be a party to it. No man can quarrel with another without the other's consent. Hence the veto of peace, if not of amity, is always in the hands of one of the disputants. It is often a duty; it is often indispensable to notice individual error. But the discharge of such a duty would not be so distasteful to the public as it now is, were it not for the personally disparaging

manner in which it is generally done. If, when objections to a public man must be made, the points were fairly selected and urged, without ill-will, the criticism would be felt to be useful and tolerable. Instead of this course a miscellaneous fire is often extended to every imaginable fault, and conjectures called in when facts are exhausted, until what was, or should be, public instruction becomes a gratification of private resentment.

Malevolence is not necessary on the platform, nor in the press. Canadian journalists told me that Mr Goldwin Smith, by showing in his own writing how a man of genius could be effective without employing dishonouring epithets, had raised the character of the whole Canadian press.

It is not just to refer to a man's lameness of body; but lameness of mind may be complained of, because that is remediable. A lame man would not enter himself in a public race with agile men, and if he enters into public controversy he must be assumed to have mental nimbleness. But, if he is always behind in his argument, his deficiency in pace may be ascribed to natural causes—to lameness of understanding. Misfortunes of nature are indefensible allusions. Canning has not been forgiven for alluding to a political opponent as the 'revered and *ruptured* Ogden.' The permanent reason for avoiding outrage is that the mugwumps who can imitate nothing else, can imitate unpleasantnesses.

The debater should keep a sharp eye on an opponent who introduces personalities. It is the device by which an astute adversary allures his assailant from his gun—so that he is not at hand to discharge it—when the enemy is in front of it.

Civilisation has imposed laws on contests, and even on war. An invading army must not poison the wells of the enemy; a duellist must stand at the assigned distance before he fires; a prize-fighter is forbidden to hit below the belt; neither man, nor horse, nor boat is allowed to

foul a competitor in a race. But in controversy there is no law, save that of honour, to prevent an adversary assailing an opponent by dishonouring imputations.

Once, in the United States Assembly, a member in audience, being weary of listening to the member in possession of the floor, rose and said, 'Mr Speaker, I should like to know how long that blackguard is to go on tiring me to death in this manner.' In the Irish House of Commons, Mr Grattan said of Mr Corrie, 'I will not call him villain, because he is a Chancellor of the Exchequer; I will not call him liar, because he is a Privy Councillor; but I will say of him, that he is one who has taken advantage of the privileges of this House to utter language to which, in any other place, my answer would have been a blow.' A duel was the immediate result. And if a duel was intended the lauguage was well chosen for the purpose.

De Morgan relates that the late Professor Vince was once arguing at Cambridge against duelling, and some one said, 'Well, but, Professor, what would you do if anyone called you a liar?' 'Sir,' said the fine old fellow, 'I should tell him to prove it, and if he did prove it, I should be ashamed of myself, and if he didn't he ought to be ashamed of himself.'

The obvious laws to be observed in controversy seem to be these:—

1. To consult the improvement of those opposed to you, and to this end argue not for resentment, or gratification, or pride, or vanity, but for their enlightenment.

2. When surmising motives do not surmise the worst, but adopt the best construction the case admits.

3. To distinguish between the personalities which impugn the judgment and those that criminate character, and not to advance accusations affecting the judgment of an adversary without distinct and indisputable proof; and never to assail character (where it must be done) on suspicion, probability, belief or likelihood.

4. Never make an incriminating imputation unless some public good is to come out of it. It is not enough that a charge is true, it must be useful to prefer it before it can be justifiably made.

5. Be so sure of your case as to be able to defy the judgment of mankind, and when assailed, maintain self-respect in reply, not forgetting justice to those to whom you are opposed.

Leigh Hunt prophesied long ago that the old philosophic conviction would revive among us, that 'the errors of mankind arise rather from the want of knowledge than from defect of goodness.' Stupidity can be informed, ignorance can be enlightened, but the collision of interest, passion and self-will, can destroy association, until men acquire justice in speech, and equity towards others.

The necessity of enforcing this most practical part of rhetoric (the Rhetoric of Dispute), which is taught in no School, Mechanics' or Literary Institution, is evidenced in the fact that an impartial, impersonal and dispassionate tone is in many eyes almost fatal to prosperity in newspaper and periodical literature. To the uneducated populace nothing that is just seems spirited. He who is not offensively personal is pronounced tame. The rancorous are most relished. The reason is that most men, when stung by a sense of injury, are naturally precipitated from extreme to extreme. Their opinions, when sincere, are not produced by the ordinary law of intellectual births, by induction or inference, but are equivocally generated by the heat of fervid emotion, wrought upon by some sense of unbearable oppression. But all this changes with the growth of knowledge. Art discards the gaudy colours of the savage; so rhetoric discards savage invective. Civilisation implies a sense of proportion.

Personalities, even those which relate to defects of understanding, are allowable within the limits of not impugning sanity; but not personal allusions which relate to defect of honour, or veracity. If you call a man an idiot, you pass

the limit of allowable personalities of the mind. He who thinks another an idiot, should be silent with regard to him. If a person be an idiot it is of no use arguing with him. He is incapable of reasoning. To use such a term towards an adversary is to stop debate—if you believe what you say. The moment this word is said the friends of the alleged imbecile are up in arms to resent the insult to his understanding, and probably the 'idiot' himself leaps up to retort upon his accuser. Then there is an end of the subject in debate. Partisans digress from it to join in the vindication of the assailed, or of the assailant.

The moment one person accuses another of want of honour or veracity, the reply is a blow, or a duel, which are held to be justifiable. If the term is believed it destroys the accused, and he feels justified in destroying his accuser. Dishonouring charges should properly go before a magistrate. A charge of personal dishonour is a breach of the peace, and the law court, and not the platform, is the more fitting place to make it. To introduce offensive accusation is to terminate debate by a pernicious digression, and arouses recrimination and passion, through which the rays of truth penetrate not. This consequence is so well understood that he who causes such digression may be suspected of intending it.

The mischief of personalities which offend is that persons who cannot argue can recriminate. A hundred persons can make imputations for ten who can reason. The discovery of truth in the maze of words and diversity of view requires concentration of attention. But irrelevancies require no thought and are popular with the majority of hearers who have not reflected on these things, or to whom irrelevancies are a relief.

CHAPTER XII

POLICY OF DEBATE

THERE are three points of policy in debate.

1. The first is the search for the truth—its recognition when found, whether in the mouth of your adversary, or elsewhere. As Dr Johnson says in his 'Irene':—

> Be virtuous ends pursued by virtuous means,
> Nor think the intention sanctifies the deed.

No talent, no genius is entitled to esteem, except as the use to which it is put is conducive to the welfare of all.

2. Since the adversary is the friend of truth, he should never be outraged or humiliated, or he will withdraw himself from the arena, or his friends will if he does not. Then debate is ended and discredited in public estimation.

3. Because discussion is the agency of establishing truth, the credit of debate should always be in the minds of both disputants. Be not contemptuous or impatient of those whose faculties are not 'on sight,' or perhaps non-existent. I would listen a reasonable time to a madman. 'Light is still light, whether it pass through coloured glass or even a *cracked* window.'

Whether ridicule and satire may be employed in debate, are questions of judgment as well as rule. 'Cicero condescended to employ ridicule against certain chimeras.' 'Condescended' is Gibbon's word, admitting or implying that ridicule is at best but one of the lower forms of argument. Satire, in the hands of Lucian, was, Gibbon thought,

a much more adequate as well as a more efficacious weapon. Shaftesbury regarded ridicule as 'one of those principal lights' under which things are to be viewed in order to their full recognition. Truth, it is supposed, may bear all lights. So it will, but the holders of the ridiculed truth will not. Most things, owing to time or circumstance—some intrinsically—have an absurd side. But it requires dexterity to show it without giving offence. In politics it requires consummate art to employ ridicule without outraging those held up to laughter. In religion it is never successful, if the object is conversion. Instructive ridicule is so difficult; and foolish ridicule is so easy, and commonly coarse and buffoonish, that, without the instinct and cultivation of art, ridicule should not be attempted. One rule is clear—a cause in a minority should never ridicule the cause of the majority. The wise profit by Coleridge's warning: 'Truth is a good dog, but beware of barking too closely at the heels of error, lest you get your brains kicked out.' Those in the majority, political and ecclesiastical, employ ridicule against the minority, without scruple or mercy, but are furious when it is employed against themselves, and resent it dangerously. Only now and then a man of genius does it on good part and amusingly. It is said by omniscient and self-complacent writers, that 'to argue with folly is to make it feel important.' But what one may deem folly may be matter of honest and serious conviction on the part of others. The subject of our ridicule, or satire, may be sacred to them: and there is neither sense nor self-respect in inflicting pain, outrage or humiliation upon sincere persons, however foolish we may deem them. A master in advocacy, John Stuart Mill, held that, 'in general, opinions, contrary to those received, can only obtain a hearing by studied moderation of language and the most cautious avoidance of *unnecessary* offence, from which they hardly ever deviate, even in the slightest degree, without losing ground.' Sarcasm is mocking, and when without bitterness is enlivening. Ridicule holds persons or

things up to laughter or contempt. Satire is diverting since it reflects on the intellectual oversight of adversaries. Ridicule is more common, because malice may inspire it. Satire is more difficult, since it is futile without wit.

> Satire, like a polished razor keen,
> Wounds with a touch scarcely felt or seen.

Sarcasm, ridicule and satire have always been regarded as bright weapons of controversy, but they require to be used with judgment and, above all, with good temper.

It is well to avoid words which may mean more than you can prove. Be chary of saying a thing is 'very' good or 'very' exact, when it may be merely good, and perhaps not that: its exactness may hardly come up to the average, when looked into. 'Most' is as dangerous as 'very.' It requires wide knowledge to say a thing is 'most' excellent. The word 'none' and 'all,' 'every' and 'always,' should be used very warily. It may require you to go over all mankind, over all time, and every event, to justify such wide-reaching terms.

If you invite opposition, do it with circumspection. The value of free speech is too great to be trifled with. Seek conflict only with sincere men. Concede to your opponent the first word and the last. Let him appoint the chairman. Let him speak double time if he desires it. Debate is objected to as an exhibition in which disputants try to surprise, outwit, take advantage of, and discomfit each other. To obviate this objection, explain to your opponent, beforehand if you can, the outline of the course you intend to pursue, acquaint him with the books you shall quote, the authorities you shall cite, the propositions you shall endeavour to prove, and the concessions you shall ask. And do this without expecting the same at his hands. He will not now be taken unawares. He will be pre-warned and pre-armed. He will have time to prepare, and if the truth is in him, it ought to come out.

If you feel that you cannot give all these advantages to your opponent, suspect yourself and your side of the question. Every conscientious and decided man believes

his views to be true, and if consistent he believes them to be impregnable. Neither in minutes, months nor years are they to be refuted. Then a man so persuaded may concede advantages to his adversary, and enable him to arm himself beforehand.

In another particular discussions were esteemed unsatisfactory. When statement and reply have been made, then came the reply to the reply, and then the reply to that, till the cavil seemed perplexing, tiresome and endless.

Now, the object of discussion is not the vexatious chase of an opponent, but the contrastive statement of opinion. Therefore endeavour to select main points, to state them strongly and clearly, and when your opponent replies be content to leave his arguments side by side with your own, for the judgment of the auditors. Do not disparage an opponent, mis-state his views, or strain his words, and thus, for the sake of a verbal triumph, produce ill-feeling. Your sole business is with what he says, not how he says it, nor why he says it. Your aim should be that the audience should lose sight of the speakers, and be possessed with the subject; and that those who come the partisans of persons shall depart the partisans of principles. The victory in a debate lies not in lowering an opponent, but in raising the subject in public estimation. Controversial wisdom lies not in destroying the adversary, but in destroying his error —not in making him ridiculous, but in making the audience wise.

A principle is a pathway. Deviation is error and waste of time. Intellectual courtesy to persons is consideration for others; it is conceding to others the right of acting on their convictions. But courtesy does not apply to giving up your own conviction nor in concealing it. He who is without principle is without any guide, not knowing what to do himself. Relinquishing or concealing personal principle is being useless to others, who are instructed by knowing their neighbours' path as well as knowing their own.

Never invent opponents—never invent the opinions of opponents. Take real ones. The dangerous preference of imagination to reality is perhaps nowhere so apparent as in the construction of controversial books. Authors satisfy themselves with inventing the arguments of their opponents, when the easiest and most satisfactory course is to extract the most powerful reasoning the other side has produced; by this course real objectors can be answered instead of fictitious ones.

A perpetual device, or error of controversialists, is to state as a fact against an adversary their *inference* from his doctrines, and declare that he means what they say. After a while, if the accusers have a powerful party on their side, they will assert that the very terms used, in such inference, were the original language of their adversary. This used to be constantly done with applause in political, ecclesiastical and sectarian controversy. The practice has not wholly died out yet. The late Mr Delane inferred from Mr Cobden's expressed opinion in favour of land reform, that he would parcel out the land of the country among the people, and said in the *Times* that Mr Cobden advised this course—which was never in Mr Cobden's mind nor in his words. Mr Delane put forth his own inference as Mr Cobden's actual avowal, which he indignantly and successfully repudiated in letters which became famous.

Controversialists make much ado about the *onus probandi*, meaning the burden of proof, which rests with him who makes an assertion. He who denies what is asserted is often, without reason, called upon to prove his negative. Beyond remarking that it is the province of the assertor to prove, accept the logically unfair demand and give the reasons why you hold the negative opinion. This meets the case as far as a negationist can meet it. It continues the discussion, and compels it to proceed, and gives the negationist the opportunity of becoming the assailant by request of his adversary.

Debate requires self-possession—a power to think on your legs. But even in debate the victory is oftener with the foregone than with the impromptu thinker. A man who knows his subject well will be forearmed. He alone can distinctly see the points in dispute, and the nature of the proof or disproof necessary to decide the question.

Two persons of opposite opinions often mistake the way of coming to a common understanding: as, for instance, when one speaks *at* the other instead of explaining his own views *to* him. Each expects the other to come over to him, which neither is inclined to do, nor intends to do. A, in expecting B to come to him, assumes that on the part of his opponent there exists a predisposition for his views. This should never be assumed. It is the first endeavour of a foreseeing propagandist to *create* it if it does not exist, and strengthen it if it does—and whether it exists or not, he should always reason as though it did not. The business of A, the converter, is to meet B on the platform B stands upon, to examine his principles, study his views and turn of thought until he finds some common ground, if such there be, of faith, morals, opinion, or practice, with which he can identify himself.

There is no easier method of commencing a conversation than by asking a question. There is no safer introduction to an argument than by asking an opponent what he means, where his meaning is doubtful. Time and circumstance have given new usage, new senses, and new associations of idea, to words that once had but one meaning. Most words have now many meanings. Where the sense in which a word is used is open to doubt—do not assume a meaning, but inquire the sense in which an opponent employs it.

The Socratic method of disputation or artful questioning (of which Zeno the Eleatic was the author), by which an opponent is entrapped into concessions, and thus confuted, is rather fit for wranglers and sophists than reasoners.

There is ground for believing that Socrates condescended to this course often at the expense of ingenuousness. It is said in his defence that *he* did it not as the sophists, for the sake of confounding virtue, but for the purer purpose of confounding dexterous vice. It is, however, beneath the dignity of a reasoner to *betray* his opponent into the truth.

Questioning, however, is an essential instrument. A high authority, Dr Arnold, has put this in a useful light:—'An inquiring spirit is not a presumptuous one, but the very contrary. He whose whole recorded life was intended to be our perfect example, is described as gaining instruction in the temple by hearing and asking questions—the one is almost useless without the other. We should ask questions of our books and of ourselves; what is its purpose—by what means it proceeds to effect that purpose—whether we fully understand the one—whether we go along with the other—do the arguments satisfy us—do the descriptions convey lively and distinct images to us—do we understand all the allusions to persons or things? In short, does our mind act over again from the writer's guidance what his acted before? do we reason as he reasoned, conceive as he conceived, think and feel as he thought and felt? or if not, can we discern where and how far we do not, and can we tell why we do not?'

Questioning has also a place in rhetoric as well as in research. Frankly conducted, it is a mode of conviction without offence. To whatever an opponent urges, with which we do not agree, of course we have some objection. Put this objection incidentally, or ask as a question, what answer can be given to it? This is a good conversational mode of debate, where the improvement of an opponent, rather than a triumph over him, is the object. It is not showy, but it is informing.

In a similar way confidence may be acquired by diffident speakers. A novitiate conversationalist is shy of taking

part in debating a topic, lest he should not be able to sustain himself. To such I have said—put your argument in the form of an objection which some would urge, and beg some one of the company to tell you what he would say in reply. If to this answer you have an objection further, put that also in the questioning form; for a man would be able to ask a question who would never be able to make a speech. Wise members of Parliament know this. Once in conversation, the diffident will speak freely enough —perhaps too freely. A coward will fight when he grows warm in strife. By questioning a novice may learn the best answers others can give to his own argument, and without exposure learn his own weakness or strength, or that of others.

In interpreting the words of an adversary, he who replies has to put some construction upon it. It is safest to put the best. He is nearly always wrong who puts the worst, whether in debate or in daily life. To put the best construction possible on a proposition in dispute is to raise debate to a higher level and maintain it there.

CHAPTER XIII

DEFENCE OF DEBATE

SPEAKING a few years ago at a Liverpool college, Mr Gladstone, who is always for fairness to adversaries, said: 'The day had gone by when reticence or railing at opponents was regarded as a sufficient defence of opinion. Assailants of religious tenets must be met by reason and not by railing.' In words to this effect he counselled that adversaries should be met by argument. Mr Gladstone is as much an ecclesiastical as a political authority, and no one else of his eminence as a Christian has, in my time, justified reasoning controversy. It is only those who, consciously or unconsciously, lack confidence in the truth of their opinions, who decry honest discussion. To him who believes he has the truth, opposition is his opportunity. He who understands that the sincere adversary is the friend of truth will find debate a great advantage. Your opponent may be the enemy of your opinions, but he is the friend of your improvement. The more ably he confronts you the more he serves you. The gods, it is said, have not given to mortals the privilege of seeing themselves as others see them; but, by a happy compensation in human affairs, it is given to adversaries to supply what the gods deny. They afford that indispensable light of contrast which enables you to discover the truth if hidden from you, or the opportunity to display the truth if you possess it. 'A good writer,' says Godwin, 'must have ductility of thought that shall enable him to put

himself in the place of his reader, and not suffer him to take it for granted, because he understands himself, that every one who comes to him for information will understand him. He must view his phrases on all sides, and be aware of all the senses of which they are susceptible.' But this facility can nowhere be so certainly acquired as in debate.

A master of debate amid orators of renown—Edmund Burke, said: 'He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This amiable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial.'

Discussion commences without prepossession, and ends without dogmatism when each disputant is anxious to explain as well as to defend his opinions. As an established truth is that which is generally received after it has been generally examined, it is evident that, though truth may be discovered by research, it can only be established by debate.

The only verification of truth possible, is when propositions supposed to be true are subjected to criticism. The most competent writers (as Samuel Bailey, to wit) on the means of ascertaining Truth agree that, while true things are true in themselves, and may come to be accepted without controversy, no one can be sure of the truth of very important propositions until they have been openly, freely, and universally discussed in a fair field of inquiry. All Milton asked was 'a free and open encounter' for truth, and no one could doubt its victoriousness. Like all intrepid advocates of a cause in a minority, Milton was too sanguine. A 'free and open' encounter is not enough—it should be a *fair* encounter also. If disputants are unequally matched as to powers of expression, extent of knowledge or means of obtaining it, or leisure for preparation for the encounter—truth for that time may not obtain the advantage. People seem not to think that debaters should be as equally matched as may be. A savage undrilled against a soldier

trained—a racer lame against one swift of foot—a village spouter against a London actor—a pedagogue against a professor—would be no fair encounter however 'free and open' it might be.

> That is no fight—as everybody knows—
> Where only one side deals the blows,
> And the other has to bear them.

It is because common-sense conditions of fairness are overlooked in discussion that many decry debate as uninstructive or disappointing. The sureness of a truth is known only when it obtains acceptance after every competent person has been heard, who has anything to say against it. Freedom of thought, and the free and equal criticism of it, is a condition of truth and progress. It is the well-understood interest of every community to permit, to encourage, and to give every man who can think, a chance of adding to the sum of Truth. At the same time, no person can hope to obtain from men of thought that indispensable criticism which they can give, unless the advocate of truth is himself studiously fair and friendly in speech.

Every man, said Walpole, and later, Pitt, has his price. Whether either had sounded the venality of patriotism and fixed the market price of his own virtue I know not. If Pitt was incorruptible, as is believed, he should not have said what he did. But with more truth and less offensiveness it may be said that every man has his reason, which, when once presented to him, will sway him; and to find this out is the problem rhetoric has to solve. I am not more favourable than Hood to the plan of 'dropping truth gently, as if it were china, and likely to break.' But if a fair case be so stated as not to mortify others by arrogance, nor annoy by ceaseless importunity, nor disgust by seeming vanity, but accompanied by evident indications of disinterested sincerity, it will generally prove acceptable. It is not the truth men hate, but the disagreeable auxiliaries

which so often attend its enunciation. Bacon, I think it is, who says in his regal manner: 'Whosoever has his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation.'

Very few people are capable of charity without compromise, or can distinguish between them. Charity recognises how a man may come by his error without being conscious of it. Compromise is suffering some error to remain, out of courtesy or expediency, in order to obtain co-operation in carrying into practice a portion of truth which would otherwise be rejected.

It is of use trying to find a common ground for debate. He who cannot find it, cannot convert. How can persons, any more than bodies, cohere, who never touch? So long as each denies to the other a share of reason on his side—so long as each maintains an infallibility of pretension to complete truth—they both assume what is contrary to the nature of things, and exclude the common ground which must be established between them, where truth and error can join issue. There are few impassable gulfs between contending men or contending opinions but such as are dug by pride and passion. All have a common consciousness of impression—a common nature to investigate—a common sincerity to actutate us—truth is our common object, and we have a common interest in discovering it. Nature made us friends: it is mostly false pride or false impressions that make us enemies. Thus common ground exists between most disputants. The common ground which exists is not one which policy makes, but one that nature provides.

These remarks regard conviction as depending upon truth

not upon forms of procedure. Nothing is recommended here which is inconsistent with truth—no cunning questioning, no sophistical entrapment. The sole precepts are those of condescension and contrast. From a common ground of agreement, you have a common point of sight, from which all objects are seen in the same light; and a clear plane is obtained on which principles can be drawn, and a perfect outline of truth and error displayed. He who has the truth will make it plain by relevant elucidation. Differences are often made wider by irrelevant, repulsive debate. Differences which did not exist are often created in this way. All honest men desire the truth, and there is a way in which they can find it. The understandings of men commonly run in a given channel—each thinker looks as it were through a telescope of his own. It is only in debate that he sees it through the telescope of his opponent, which clarifies his own views. Let no man conclude because no immediate change of opinion is manifest in debate, that none has taken place. The life of thought may be begun. Seed brought from Egypt was found to grow more than eighteen centuries after it was garnered.

The supreme advantage of debate is that it compels a man to think. A man is not a man unless he is a thinker—he is a fool having no ideas of his own. If he happens to live among men who do think, he browses, like an animal, on their ideas. He is a sort of kept-man, being supported by the thoughts of others. He is what in England we call a pauper, who subsists upon out-door relief allowed him by men of intellect. Nevertheless, there are persons in every assembly who, like Curran, have powers and know it not; or, like Macklin, who was more than forty years old before he knew that he

> Was the Jew
> Whom Shakespeare drew.

Thousands have powers unsuspected by themselves or

others. Some may be compared to that daughter of the first Duke of Marlbrough—

> All nature's charms in Sunderland appear,
> Bright as her eyes, and as her reason clear;
> Yet still their force, to men not safely known,
> Seems undiscovered to herself alone.

The defence of debate—like that of national education—is that it discovers and trains latent talent for the service and exaltation of the nation.

Oral examination surpasses all other forms. Discussion after many discourses would be of great public value. The argument against debate, that it would lead to strife and discord, is one reason why it should be practised. Men are childish intellectually, while in that state in which debate must be prohibited. If they be children, train them in the art of debate until they are translated into men. To admit debate after an address, it is said, enables factious individuals to destroy the effect of what has been said. It is often the fault of the speaker if anyone is able to efface the effect of his speech.

As a general rule, discussions, set and accidental, are good. A twofold reality by means of debate is brought to bear on the public understanding, more exciting than that of any other intellectual agency. An opinion that is worth holding is worth diffusing, and to be diffused it must be thought about; and when men think on true principles they become adherents—but only those adherents are worth having who have thought over both sides, and discussion alone makes them do that. True, men may read on both sides; but it seldom happens that men who are impressed by one side care to read the other. In discussions they are obliged to hear the other side. If men do read both sides, unless they read a 'discussion,' they do not find all the facts on one side specially considered on the other. 'In a discussion read, unless read at one sitting, the strength of any impres-

sion and the clearness of the argument on one side is partly lost before the opponent's side is perused. But in an oral debate, the relation of fact to fact is more complete—the pro and con are heard successively, the light of contrast is full and clear, and both sides are weighed at the same time, when the eye of the mind is sharply fixed on the balance. If the disputants are intellectual gladiators so much the better, provided they are in earnest. The stronger they are, the mightier and the more instructive the conflict. It is said that people come out of such discussions as they go into them, that the same partisans shout or hiss on the same side all through. This is not always true, and no matter if it is. The work of conviction is often done though the audience may not show it. They may break your head, and afterwards own you were right. Human pride forbids the confession, but change is effected in spite of pride. But if an audience remain the same at night, they will not be the same the next morning. Conviction is begun in discussion which is not ended there. He who hastily changes his views is to be suspected of weakness, or carelessness, or caprice. The steady, inquiring and deliberate thinker is the safest convert.

It is a maxim of the schoolmen that we never really know what a thing is, unless we are also able to give a sufficient account of its opposite. This is the maxim of contrast that enters into all effective persuasion. Professor Bain, in his 'Essay on Early Philosophy,' remarks:—

The essence of the Dialectic Method is to place side by side with every doctrine and its reasons, all opposing doctrines and their reasons, allowing these to be stated in full by the persons holding them. No doctrine is to be held as expounded, far less proved, unless it stands in parallel array to every other counter-theory, with all that can be said for each. For a short time this system was actually maintained and practised; but the execution of Socrates gave it its first check, and the natural intolerance

of mankind rendered its continuance impossible. Since the Reformation, struggles have been made to regain for the discussion of questions generally—philosophical, political, moral, and religious, the two-sided procedure of the law-courts, and 'perhaps never more strenuously than now.' Remember that—

> Through mutual intercourse and mutual aid,
> Great deeds are done, and great discoveries made;
> The wise new wisdom on the wise bestow,
> Whilst the lone thinker's thoughts come slight and slow.

Persons whom you take to be wise and choose to think honest, will arrest discussion and conceal their own ignorance by insisting that the point in dispute is a mere affair of terms. 'What's in a name?' they say. Everything. Truth is in the right name. The wrong name misleads. Difference in terms means difference of ideas. To one who says he means the same as you, only under a different name, ask him to take your name and thus indicate the unity of his idea. He will do nothing of the kind, and you will soon see there is a difference in his mind. But for debate he would go on believing there was none.

It is no mean excellence in debate that it alone relieves a man of honourable conscience of responsibility. How can anyone bear the idea of putting forth opinions for which others, who adopt them, must in this life or the next be answerable—and he accords them no opportunity of the self-defence of debate? He who is not infallible must often be in error, even where he is most earnest, and he is answerable for whatever he says or does which influences the life of others. Discussion alone can save him from the consequences of his advocacy, so far as it may be erroneous.

CHAPTER XIV

THE THEORY OF EPITHETS—MORAL AS WELL AS RHETORICAL

THE question of epithets covers so wide a range of morals, manner of mind as well as policy of speech, that several considerations are necessary to adequately understanding it. At every step an observing student is admonished how conscientiously a man will say things he will one day wish he could recall. Carlton tells truly—

> Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
> You can't do that way when you're flying words.
> Careful with fire is good advice we know;
> Careful with words is ten times doubly so,
> Thoughts unexpress'd may sometimes fall back dead,
> But God Himself can't kill them once they're said.

Many enter the quagmire of recrimination without adequate reflection. The question is commonly put, 'Ought we not to state all we know to be true?' Not unless it can be shown to be useful. Every man knows a thousand things which are true, but which it would advantage nobody to hear. When we speak, the rule is absolute that we speak the truth, but *what* truth we will voluntarily communicate good sense must be the judge. If all truth must be published, without regard to fitness or justice, William Rufus, who drew a tooth a day from a rich Jew's head, to induce him to tell truly where his treasures were concealed, was a great moral philosopher. 'Well, but what a man believes to be true and useful may he not

state?' will be asked by some. Not unless he can *prove* it. If every man stated his *suspicions*, no character would be safe from aspersion, all society would be a school of scandal. Suspicion is the food of slander. There is already more evil in existence than the virtuous are likely soon to correct, and little necessity exists for suspicion to supply hypothetical cases. 'But,' observes the reader, 'if two disputants have respectively proved the fitness of the epithets they have mutually applied, are they not justified in having used them?' Better leave that to the audience, unless, as has been said, the object is to end the discussion, for the auditors assured they have two rascals before them, will leave the room. No disputant should unite the offices of witness, jury and judge, giving his own evidence, returning his own verdict, and pronouncing the sentence in his own favour. It is this habit which has been the discredit of religious, political and literary discussions. Lawyers are the philosophers of disputes, and have wisely taken out of the hands of interest, petulance and prejudice, the power of deciding upon their own case. Yet disputants will do that unhesitatingly with regard to each other, which, in a court of justice, would long tax the patience and discernment of twelve disinterested, dispassionate men. The difficulty of being right as to epithets shows the necessity of being sparing in their use. Epithets are more safely applied to the characterisation of opinions than of persons. If you accuse certain stones of a certain property which is not possessed by all, the exceptional stones will not be scandalised, as the same number of men would whom you happened to include in a carelessly-worded, disparaging, general assertion. The wrongly accused are not pacified by your saying, 'Oh, I did not mean you; I meant to allow that there were exceptions.' Never forget that 'all' means everyone.

It is a wise maxim in law—in rhetoric as well—that ten guilty men had better escape than that one innocent man should suffer. So with personal judgments. The one

innocent man condemned will do both judge and justice more harm than the ten guilty who escape.

Persons who deem duels with daggers or pistols absurd and murderous, will fight duels with their tongues or pens, though tragedies of domestic alienation, or public hatred and wreck of parties frequently follow therefrom. Since the perfect style of public invective can no longer be employed, why should the habit still linger? After Grattan had denounced Corrie as a liar, all progress in discussion was arrested until the two orators had attempted to murder each other.

Professor A. de Morgan, in his reply to Sir W. Hamilton, in their discussion on the origination of Formal Logic, makes these useful remarks :—

'In the days of swords it was one of the objects of public policy to prevent people from sticking them into each other's bodies on trivial grounds. We now wear pens; and it is as great a point to hinder ourselves from sticking them into each other's characters, without serious and well-considered reasons. To this end I have always considered it as one of the first and most special rules, that *conviction* of the truth of a charge is *no sufficient reason for its promulgation*. I assert that no one is justified in accusing another *until he has his proof ready*; and that in the interval, if indeed it be right that there should be any interval between the charge and the attempt at substantiation, all the leisure and energies of the accuser are the property of the accused.'

Improvement and not mortification of person or detraction of character should govern the employment of epithets as well as arguments. Disagreements are human and inevitable. Differences are in themselves as natural and as innocent as variation in form, colour or strength. It is the manner in which those who differ seek to adjust their differences that constitutes any disgrace there may be in any divergence of opinion or belief. Philosophy has been preached to us in vain, if we ever take up arms against an opponent without at

the same time keeping justice to him in view, as well as our own defence. To promote the welfare of those who probably hate us, is generous but difficult. Addison called his opponents 'miscreants,' Dr Clarke 'crazy,' Paley 'insane,' which did not produce amity or instruction. The profit of controversy lies in contrast of argument ever fresh and instructive. Recrimination, if common to both disputants, has, like the common quantities in an equation, to be struck out of the dispute as only making delay in finding the true result. Epithets are better confined to error. Even in Parliament the Speaker seems to possess no dictionary of personal epithets. Members are not always checked when they use inadmissible terms, and when attention has been called to them the Speaker, for the time being, has not always been ready with a definition of the disputed word, and has sometimes been wrong when he has given it. Leaders of the House have sometimes been unready in supplying a decisive meaning, which shows that there is no Parliamentary Code of epithets in existence, and neither Sir Erskine May nor Mr Palgrave, who have written on Parliamentary procedure and practice, appear to have compiled any such work. Mr Gladstone, who appears to know the meaning of every word, and never errs in terms of imputation, might compile such a code at will. Indeed, one might be made from episodes in his speeches. Take two instances. Sir Stafford Northcote one day complained of what Mr Gladstone had just said. 'Of what do you complain?' Mr Gladstone asked. 'Of misrepresentation,' answered Sir Stafford. 'The right honourable gentleman does not mend the matter by that rather rude expression.' Misrepresentation implies an intentional perversion of another's meaning. Speaking in reply to Lord R. Churchill, Mr Gladstone remarked—'My reference was this. The noble lord distinctly accused me and accused the Liberal party of traducing an adversary. It is impossible to conceive a charge more disgraceful. It is a charge which

implies falsehood in the first place. There is no traducing by error. Traducing is a wilful act, and that wilful act is imputed to me by the noble lord.'

A few examples of the meaning of terms disparaging or dishonouring may show the student the sort of attention which epithets meant to wound (the kind here considered) require.

'Liar' means that a person says what is not true and knows it to be untrue, and that he consciously and deliberately says what he does say with a view to deceive. 'Liar' is a favourite epithet with the lowest class of opponents. It puts a man who uses it out of any court, save a court of law. No court of honour would adjudicate upon it. It should be referred to a court of scavengers, whose business it would be to remove it. The term is not a matter of taste; it is a breach of the peace, and would be resented by a blow, or a duel, or contempt, which would keep him inexorably at a distance who used it. If a man thought his adversary was not to be believed on his word he might say so. But then he puts an end to the controversy, which it is useless to continue when one disputant does not believe what the other says. It is like cheating at cards. The playing is over as soon as the charge of cheating is made. One who wrote with authority said, if one says to another 'You lied there,' and we regard only the principal signification of that expression, it is the same thing as if he had said to him, 'You know the contrary of what you say.' But besides this principal signification, these words convey an idea of contempt and outrage; and they inspire the belief that he who uttered them would not hesitate to do us harm, which renders them offensive and injurious.

The minor terms of turpitude are many, which contain dishonouring imputations. Of such is the term 'traduce.' To say another traduces you, implies that he vilifies and defames you, not only falsely but knowingly. I have seen a memorial addressed to Lord Palmerston, in which he was

accused of 'duplicity.' The term killed the memorial. What Minister could look at a request from persons who affixed to him the stigma of double dealing? To charge an opponent with 'quibbling' is to say he knows the truth is against him, and that he seeks to evade it. To accuse an adversary of 'garbling' is equally offensive. It means that he knowingly quotes what gives a false impression. It is lawful to warn an opponent that what he imputes to you, you regard as insulting; but to charge him with insulting you is to charge him with an intentional outrage upon you, and if he be a person of self-respect he will not hold further intercourse with one while he persists in the charge. A 'falsehood' is not only something untrue, but known to be untrue by the teller. If it is not intended to imply this, the statement must be described as untrue, erroneous, or founded on misinformation.

Any man of reflection can tell by one test whether a term is fit to be applied to another by asking himself whether he would submit to have it applied to himself. No term that implies consciousness of moral wrong can be used towards another without offence. But there is a class of words which relate to errors of the mind which touch a man's capacity, and not his honour, which may be used. A sensible man is instructed by the most penetrating criticism or characterisations of his inconsistencies or narrowness of knowledge. To say a man is economical in the use of truth refers to the smallness of his hoard of it, and not to a fraudulent reservation of it. It may be allowable to refer to malformation in the mind in which the backbone of fact is evidently crooked. I have said to an adversary whom I did not intend to accuse of wilful misrepresentation, that he had a 'refracting mind.' The straightest stick put into a pail of water appears bent, and the straightest fact put before some minds will appear distorted; the trouble being with the medium and not with the intent.

Take a familiar instance of the difficulties of explicit expression. 'I said the gentleman lied, it is true. I am

sorry for it. What is true? Did the gentleman lie? I said I was sorry for it. Does it mean he did not lie, and that I was sorry I said he did, or that it is true he did lie, and that I am sorry to have to admit it? This is a case which shows how difficult it is sometimes to say straight off what is intended.

If men understood half the trouble there is in making out what the truth really is, and half the trouble there is in making it plain to others, so that they cannot possibly misunderstand it, there would not be half the anger or half the wonder there now is, when one person differs from another in opinion—and more hesitancy in applying disparaging epithets upon first impressions.

There is a point of extreme interest attaching to this question which it may be useful to mention, but irrelevant to discuss. What is to be done with persons who make dishonouring imputations? Should they be noticed? If persons 'of no importance'—as Oscar Wilde would say—should be raised from their noisome obscurity by reference to them as though they were authorities on manners and their opinion had weight, imputation would be good policy for the obscure. Should a man like Thackeray, having cause of offence against Edmund Yates, withdraw from his club unless Mr Yates was expelled? When a person who has a character to lose, uses aspersive words towards another, it seems sufficient to show they were unfounded, when their untruth must be admitted, and it is the asperser who is damaged and not the aspersed. The asperser is regarded as belonging to a class who have no sense of honour in the use of terms.

When a young man, I was appointed secretary to the Garibaldi Committee. Hearing one day an inquiry as to the accounts, I made them up and sent a cheque for the balance to the treasurer; whereupon a member of the committee, then in Parliament and afterwards in the Cabinet, came down and expressed vehement indignation,

saying gentlemen were not as other people who go by suspicion, but act on facts, and what I had done was an imputation upon them — adding, in a cordial tone, 'Remember, if I had not had great respect for you I would not have taken the trouble to express this resentment.' The storm broke in a compliment. But I never forgot the lesson that with a sensible man personal dissent from you, and the rectification of your error, depends upon the respect in which an adversary holds the person to be put right. In a society a good deal turns upon how far a man should tolerate the comradeship of those who have made aspersive charges. Excellent and most useful members of a party will resign and leave it very much the poorer by their loss, because of some offensive thing said of them. We see this done in the House of Commons, and sometimes those driven from their party seek to destroy it in resentment. Why is it that some dishonouring epithet used by some coarse-minded, ill-tempered, inconsiderate member of a party should have conceded to it the power of driving its best members out of it, and even of breaking it up? This is not the place to pursue the subject, but so much as is said may serve to show the danger that lurks in evil epithets and phrases.

It is worth while asking—Cannot honour protect itself; cannot it stand upon its own well-earned repute without the hot explosion which a vicious epithet often calls forth? Lord Coleridge had the most silvery tongue on the Bench, but if assailed he could defend himself with words which had vitriol in them and burnt where they fell; yet he did not intend that the object of his resentment should believe all he said. How often are noble friendships cancelled, acts of kindness and generosity obliterated, and all for a word, probably spoken in choler, or under excitement, misinformation, or pressure of care which paralyse, if not unhinge, the mind. There is a good deal of empty, mean, timid pride which goes by the name of 'honour.'

Let two persons talk together with all deliberation and caution, and note how many expletives they employ—how many errors they commit—how insequential are their thoughts, and often how inexact their language. How few ready writers or speakers are precise—how few are continuously coherent—how much is said which is never meant, even by those who are careful! How few acquire the habit of thinking before they speak! Does not the lawyer, whose life is a study of accuracy, find the carefully debated Act of Parliament open to three or four interpretations? And does not the philosopher daily regret the vagueness of human language? Then on what principle of good sense can men, without careful inquiry as to the actual meaning of others, hurl at them noxious epithets? All might usefully bear in mind the Arab saying (which, indeed, is the moral of this chapter) lately rendered by Constantia Brooks in the *Century*:—

Remember, three things come not back;
The arrow sent upon its track—
It will not swerve, it will not stay
Its speed; it flies to wound or slay.

The spoken word, so soon forgot
By thee; but it has perished not;
In other hearts 'tis living still,
And doing work for good or ill.

And the lost opportunity,
That cometh back no more to thee.
In vain thou weepest, in vain dost yearn,
Those three will never more return.

CHAPTER XV

METHOD IN EXPRESSION

METHOD is policy in statement, and relates mainly to arrangement of the parts of a discourse. When I was a Social Missionary in Robert Owen's days, one of my colleagues was a tailor—Mr Speir—who had only such knowledge as a person of his occupation could acquire himself; but he had so fine a faculty of method that what he did know relating to any subject he spoke upon, was set forth with such masterly lucidity—each succeeding part following from the preceding one—that he produced more conviction than other lecturers with many times his knowledge. When I was a learner and a listener to lectures in the Birmingham Mechanics' Institution, I observed that when a man of great repute in his department addressed us, he was the simplest and most lucid of all—said the least, and taught us most.

Coleridge asks, 'What is it that first strikes us, and strikes us at once, in a man of education, and which, among educated men, so instantly distinguishes the man of superior mind? Not always the weight or novelty of his remarks, nor always the interest of the facts which he communicates —for the subject of conversation may chance to be trivial, and its duration to be short. Still less can any just admiration arise from any peculiarity in his words and phrases. The true cause of the impression made on us is that his mind is methodical. We perceive this in the unpremedi-

tated and evidently habitual arrangement of his words, flowing spontaneously and necessarily from the clearness of the leading idea, from which distinctness of mental vision, when men are fully accustomed to it, they obtain a habit of foreseeing at the beginning of every sentence how it is to end, and how all its parts may be brought out in the best and most orderly succession. However irregular and desultory the conversation may happen to be, there is method in the fragments.' Those who try it will find that a little method is worth a great deal of memory.

'Since custom,' says the wise Bacon, 'is the principal magistrate of a man's life, let him, by all means, endeavour to obtain good customs.' Digressiveness is the natural action of the human faculties, till custom or habit come in to give them a settled direction. Man is as liable, and more liable, to be influenced by the last impression than by any preceding one; and the liability of man is the characteristic of children. The teacher knows this. It is the object of discipline to check the tendency to digression, and give stability to method. A man may be made to perceive method, but not to follow it, without the power of discipline. A child accustomed to it will go to bed in the dark with peace and pleasure, but all the rhetoric in the world would not accomplish the same end without habit. Nothing but habit will give the power of habit.

Drawing characters in novels or dramas is a matter of method. An original character of general interest is not easily conceived. Heroes or heroines must have some characteristic of speech or—better and more difficult to sustain—some manner of mind, by which the reader knows them whenever they appear. The method of the successful author is to keep these characteristics in sight. Coleridge thought that 'the character of Hamlet is decided by the constant recurrence, in the midst of every pursuit, of philosophic reflections.' Mrs Quickly's talk is marked by that lively incoherence so common with garrulous women,

whereby the last idea suggests the successor, each carrying the speaker further from the original subject. After this manner:—'Speaking of tails—we always like them that end well—Hogg's for instance—speaking of hogs—we saw one of these animals the other day lying in the gutter, and in the opposite one a well-dressed man; the former had a ring in his nose, the latter had a ring on his finger. The man was drunk, the hog was sober. A man is known by the company he keeps.' As Dr Caius clips English, some of Bulwer's characters amplify periods. Scott makes Dominie Sampson exclaim 'Prodigious.' Dickens's Sam Weller talks droll slang. In other and highest forms of art, an overwhelming passion pervades a character, or an intellectual idiosyncrasy is the peculiar quality, leading the possessor to look at everything in a given light. But whatever may be the feature fixed upon, its methodical working out constitutes individuality of character.

In the preceding paragraph the reader has met with this sentence: 'We saw the other day one of these animals (a pig) lying in the gutter, and in the opposite *one* a well-dressed man; the *former* had a ring in his nose, the *latter* had a ring on his finger.' He who would cultivate directness and vigour of speech, his method should be to avoid these hateful trouble-giving words 'former' and 'latter,' and even 'one' and 'other,' as representing things cited, unless they are close at hand and immediately before the eyes, as in Hamlet's remark, 'look on this picture and on that.' 'Former' and 'latter' are always detestable, as they interrupt attention while it goes back to look for the thing referred to. Suppose the pig sentence above quoted was put thus: We saw the other day a *pig* lying in the gutter, and in the opposite *gutter* a well-dressed man. The *pig* had a ring in his nose—the *man* had a ring on his finger. Here is methodical directness, and no doubts raised as to whether 'one' refers to pig or gutter, and no doubt as to the two animals referred to.

Next to those who talk as though they would never come to the point, are a class of bores who talk as though they did not know what the point was. Before they have proceeded far in telling a story, they stumble upon some Mr 'What's-his-name,' whom they have forgotten, and, though it does not matter whether he had a name or not, the narrative is made to stand still until they have gone through the tiresome and fruitless task of trying to remember the name—in which they never succeed.

When Fadladeen is asked his critical opinion on the poem of Feramorz he commences thus:—'In order to convey with clearness my opinion of the story this young man has related, it is necessary to take a review of all the stories that ever were told—' 'My good Fadladeen!' exclaimed Lalla Rookh, interrupting him, 'we really do not deserve that you should give yourself so much trouble. Your opinion of the poem we have just heard will, no doubt, be abundantly edifying, without further waste of your valuable erudition.' 'If that be all,' replied the critic—evidently mortified at not being allowed to show how much he knew—'if that be all that is required, the matter is easily dispatched.' He then proceeded to analyse the poem. The wit of Moore here satirises a discursiveness common to the learned as well as to the uninstructed.

Prolixity, says Bentham, may be where redundancy is not. Prolixity may arise, not only from the multifarious insertion of unnecessary articles, but from the conservation of too many necessary ones in a sentence; as a workman may be overladen not only with rubbish, which is of no use for him to carry, but with materials the most useful and necessary, when heaped up into loads too heavy for him at once. There is a limit to the lifting powers of each man, beyond which all attempts only charge him with a burthen to him immovable. There is in like manner a limit to the grasping power of man's apprehension, beyond

which, if you add article to article, the whole shrinks from under his utmost efforts. 'Too much is seldom enough,' say the Authors of *Guesses at Truth*. 'Pumping after your bucket is full prevents it keeping so.' It belongs to method to limit information to the capacity of the hearers to deal with it, as well as to the capacity of the speaker to dispense it. The mind is often stricken with a palsy of thought; sometimes with a paralysis by weight of information which prevents it thinking. It was probably knowledge of this nature that made Hobbes exclaim, 'If I read as much as my neighbours I should be as ignorant as they are.' The word 'cramming' excludes a selection of knowledge for choice in use. Cramming is filling the mind with all the information relating to many subjects, so that thought has no room or power to move on any. It was said—when he became querulous—by Mr Somerville, the 'Whistler at the Plough,' that Mr Cobden employed him to cram him on Corn-Law questions. If Mr Cobden employed him to collect outlying facts for him, he did wisely. Cobden always kept his mind disengaged and free to deal with relevant facts, as was manifest in his judgment and decision in what he brought forward in argument. Mr Spurgeon wisely employed a reader at the British Museum to look up for him droll sayings of humorous preachers, which he used with a discretion and fitness which made them his own. It is method which directs an orator in the uses of illustration, and keeps them from becoming the substance instead of the light of a discourse.

Method in common things is often important. A good deal may depend on how you place your facts. Some years ago it was the custom in Glasgow, when a fire broke out in the evening, for the police to enter the theatre and announce the fire and the locality, that if any person concerned was present, he might be apprised of his impending loss. On one occasion, when the watch commenced to announce 'Fire—45 Candleriggs,' the audience took alarm at the

word 'Fire,' and concluded that it applied to the theatre. A rush ensued, which prevented the full notice being heard, and several persons lost their lives. The inversion of the order of announcement, '45 Candleriggs on Fire,' would have prevented the disaster. But afterwards, the practice of such announcements was forbidden, as though it were impossible to reform the rhetoric of policemen.

A like want of method appeared on the tombstone of a preacher who died in India, which ran thus: 'Sacred to the memory of the Rev. David Zelus, who, after twenty years of unremitting labour as a missionary, was accidentally shot by his steward.' Then followed the line, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' The object was not to praise the man for killing his minister, but the line was so placed as to do it.

What eloquence is more touching, as a rule, than that of a simple tale of actual wrong? Dispassionateness gives the air of truth. Controlled passion leads us to suspect the partisan. Invective is the twin brother of exaggeration. The suffrage of mankind is always on the side of dignity. When a man feels that he has a strong case, his hearers have less excitement and no self-returned verdict. A man who thinks he has a clear case can safely leave it to the judgment of others. No barrister makes a long speech to the jury when the evidence is all on his side. Sir Fitzroy Kelly never shed tears except when he had Tawell to defend, who had confessed his crime to him, nor did Sergeant Phillips weep save when he knew Courvoisier guilty.

As has been said, earnestness is an element of force; but earnestness must go only as far as the hearers will believe it to be real. No assembly is moved by an intensity they do not feel to be well founded and cannot share. It is not only in vain you say more than your hearers will believe; it is against you. For those who distrust your judgment cease to be under your influence.

Art in statement is like cultivated taste in exhibiting

treasures. The picture or statuette must be seen with the glory of space around it. All crowding is distraction and detraction. Multiplicity is not magnificence, as the uneducated think. Details have but a limited place in statement. Out of place they are meaner things crowding about the nobler, hiding the proportions of beauty, distracting, tormenting and outraging the trained eye or ear. As the mariner sees a revolving light easier than a fixed one, so an object alternately dark and light is seen more clearly and noticed longer than uniformity of brightness. In the English International Exhibition there were ten times more objects of art and of industrial invention and skill than in the French Exhibition of the same character. But the French produced ten times more effect than we did, because the English less understand that space is a part of splendour. Thus in literature and eloquence, as well as in art, it is a rule of method to let the main points be distinctly seen without impedimentary obstacles or the shadow of an alien attraction. Bear in mind that diversion is dispersion of power.

On the principle of method, things related should go together, and this relationship kept in view not only assists the understanding of the hearer, but aids the memory of the speaker. Forty-two years ago (October 1854), the *Quarterly Review* gave the following instance without showing or knowing its origin or lesson. Macklin, himself a great actor, one evening gave a lecture on 'Memory in Connection with Oratory,' and said that he had a system of memory by which he could repeat anything after once hearing it. Whereupon Foote, a wit of that day, handed him a paper, asking him to read it and then repeat it from memory. The paper contained these words:—

'So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf, to make an apple-pie: and at the same time a great she-bear, coming up the street, pops its head into the shop. "What? No soap." So he died, and she very imprudently married

the barber, and there were present the Picninnies, and the Joblillies, and the Garcelies, and the grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round button at top; and they all fell to playing the game of catch as catch can, till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots.'

Macklin's Art of Memory failed him straightway. The utter disconnection of every idea presented with that which went before—the total absence of all relationship defeated him. Relationship, the principle of method, is the handmaid of memory. The very rudiment of method is to have a point and keep to it—that is, to let the march of speech lead direct to it. Remember, the shortest distance to any point is a straight line. One who knew says: 'Keep always to the point, or with an eye upon it;' and instead of saying things to make people stare and wonder, say what will withhold them hereafter from wondering and staring. To make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things common, is philosophy.

If you wish a traveller to reach a distant town—by a way unknown to him—you endeavour to select for him a way free from cross-roads, lest he may turn aside and lose himself. An exordium should be of this character, that the understanding may pass uninterruptedly into the heart of the subject. Motley terms, questionable assertions, disputable dogmas, are the cross-roads; so much like the real road that the traveller after truth often loses himself before he is half way on his journey.

A discerning writer, John Morley, I think, in his book on Burke, says:—'Of the effect of the want of method in neutralising the most magnificent powers, Burke is a remarkable instance. As an orator, Burke dazzled his hearers, then distracted them, and finished by fatiguing or offending them. And it was not uncouth elocution and exterior only which impaired the efficacy of his speeches. Burke almost always deserted his subject before he was abandoned by his audience. In the

progress of a long discourse he was never satisfied with proving that which was principally in question, or with enforcing the single measure which it was his business and avowed purpose to enforce — he diverged to a thousand collateral topics — he demonstrated as many disputed propositions — he established principles in all directions — he illuminated the whole horizon with his magnificent, but scattered, lights. Having too many points to prove, his auditors in their turn forgot that they had undergone the process of conviction upon any.'

But how can method in oratory be better illustrated than in the following passage from a morning sermon at South Place Chapel, London, delivered by W. J. Fox when he was preacher there :—

'From the dawn of intellect and freedom Greece has been a watchword on the earth. There rose the social spirit to soften and refine her chosen race, and shelter as in a nest her gentleness from the rushing storm of barbarism; there liberty first built her mountain throne, first called the waves her own, and shouted across them a proud defiance to despotism's banded myriads; there the arts and graces danced around humanity, and stored man's home with comforts, and strewed his path with roses, and bound his brows with myrtle, and fashioned for him the breathing statue, and summoned him to temples of snowy marble, and charmed his senses with all forms of eloquence, and threw over his final sleep their veil of loveliness; there sprung poetry, like their own fabled goddess, mature at once from the teeming intellect, gilt with arts and armour that defy the assaults of time and subdue the heart of man; there matchless orators gave the world a model of perfect eloquence, the soul the instrument on which they played, and every passion of our nature but a tone which the master's touch called forth at will; there lived and taught the philosophers of bower and porch, of pride and pleasure, of deep speculation, and of useful action, who developed all the acuteness

and refinement, and excursiveness, and energy of mind, and were the glory of their country when their country was the glory of the earth.'

Here the student discerns the hand of a master of method. There was no cheering at the close of this splendid period, but the rustle of dresses and stir of admiration as the congregation, who had bent forward, sat upright again, told of the enchantment diffused by the brilliant relevance of the preacher.

CHAPTER XVI

TACT AN ACQUISITION

No one can have tact who has not taste. How can a man tell which is the best thing to do who has no intelligent preferences? Tact consists in graceful conciliation.

The distinction between method and tact is illustrated by the following practical remarks of Paley :—'For the purpose of addressing different understandings—for the purpose of sentiment—for the purpose of exciting admiration of our subject we diversify our views, we multiply examples. [This is tact.] But for the purpose of strict argument one clear instance is sufficient; and not only sufficient, but capable, perhaps, of generating a firmer assurance than what can arise from a divided attention.' [This is method.] When an opponent urges an objection, one way of replying to it is to prove that the assertion contained in the objection is not true. Another is to show that if even the assertion be true, it is no objection to the position taken. It sometimes happens that the argument advanced against an opponent is really an argument in his favour. Tact discovers and avails itself of these advantages. Method arranges the materials, tact applies the resources of reasoning.

An obituary notice of Sir William Follet said :—'We do not mean that at any period of his life he could be described as a scientific lawyer. His professional position was attributed neither to the superiority of his professional

knowledge nor to any talent above his contemporaries. In Parliament he displayed no stores of political, literary and economical information, nor versatility, nor vigorous invective. It must be admitted that he was neither an orator, nor a man of genius, nor a man of learning, apart from the speciality of his profession. He had neither passion, nor imagination of the fancy or of the heart. In what, then, lay his barristerial superiority? His great skill consisted in presenting his case in the most harmonious and fair-purposed aspect. If there was anything false or fraudulent, a hitch, or a blot in his cause, he kept it dexterously out of view, or hurried it trippingly over, but if the blot was on the other side, he had the eye of the lynx and the scent of the hound to detect and run down his game. He had the greatest skill in reading an affidavit, and could play the "artful dodger" in a style looking so like gentlemanly candour, that you could not find fault; but in reading an affidavit on the opposite side, he was cunning of fence.'

Such an example illustrates legal tact. Tact so employed may denote a clever lawyer, but a very indifferent man.

Thom, the weaver poet, told a story in the best vein of Scotch shrewdness. He was one day recounting an anecdote of Inveraray, or old Aberdeen—the point of the story rested on a particular word spoken in a fitting place. When he came to it he hesitated, as though at a loss for the term. 'What is it you say under these circumstances?' he asked; 'not this—nor that,' he remarked, as he went over three or four terms by way of trial, as each was endeavouring to assist him. 'Ah,' he added, apparently benevolent towards the difficulty into which he had thrown his hearers, 'we say ——! for want of a better word.' This of course was the word wanted, the happiest phrase the language afforded. He gained several things thus. He enlivened a narrative by an exciting digression, which increased the force and point of the climax. He created a difficulty for his auditors, who, when suddenly asked, would be

unable to find a term which seemed denied to his happy resource, or, finding it, would distrust it and not have the courage to present it to such a fastidious epithetist. Thom thus exalted himself by finding what appeared out of their power, and excited an indefinite wonder at his own skill in bringing a story to so felicitous an end by the employment of a make-shift phrase. What would he have done if he could have found the right one? was naturally thought. This was tact. It was a case analogous to that given by Dickens in one of his early papers, where the president of a Club, at an apparent loss for a word, asks, 'What is that you give a man who is deprived of a salary which he has received all his life for doing nothing; or, perhaps worse, for obstructing public improvement?' 'Compensation,' suggested the Vice.

To do by design what Thom did without it is necessary to choose some rare and happy word to use in some intended remarks, and keep in memory two or three other words which might be tolerable in that place. Hesitate on coming to the right term, inquire for it, and repeat the inferior words one by one and dismiss them; then name, as though it was just thought of, the fitting word. Spontaneity is the charm of the incident; but all is spoiled if calculation is perceived in it. As a device such experiments are useful to the student, as practice in aptitude, since the difficulty of finding the right word at a critical point constantly occurs, when hesitation is not artifice but inevitable. As an artifice it begets distrust.

There is tact in the use of phrases free from any objection. E. S. Dallas cites Sainte Beuve as throwing out his meaning in a happy phrase, which being insufficient, he tries another. That is not quite right. By one phrase which falls short, by another that goes too far, and others which are beside the mark, he indicates what he would be at.

It is the judicious application of means that constitutes tact. In journalism tact is indispensable. The history of

Mr Murray's daily paper, the *Representative*, published for six or eight months, is proof that unlimited command of capital, great literary ability in every branch of knowledge, and the highest patronage, are all insufficient to establish a paper without tact. Mr Murray's regal and legal, ermined and coroneted, lay and clerical, civil and military friends, lacked that essential gift, or the editor did.

There is tact in reply, as when a gentleman who had been out shooting over a friend's estate with ill-success, and was anxious to learn the gamekeeper's opinion, inquired ingratiatingly whether he had ever seen a worse shot. The gamekeeper, unwilling to make an admission which might be discomforting to his master's guest, answered, 'Oh, yes, I have met with many much worse, for you misses them so cleanly.' An Irishman being asked by two ladies 'which he thought the older?' saw, with the quickness of his race, that if he made a distinction he should get into trouble with one of them, replied brightly, 'To tell you the truth, you each look younger than the other.' With such an assurance both were satisfied. Douglas Jerrold excelled in extricating himself from a difficulty on the spur of the moment. Overtaking one whom he took to be a familiar friend, he slapped him on the back. The gentleman turned round, looking as black as a judge's hanging cap. Jerrold said, 'I beg your pardon, I thought I knew you—but I'm glad I don't.' Tact of this kind depends on brightness and self-possession, qualities capable of cultivation.

It never occurs to some people that gaiety of mind is a charm on the platform as well as in the household. They do not understand that cheerfulness is a duty towards others, and tells upon an audience as well as upon friends. The grave are always dull. They belong to the charnel-house side of life. Others have hedgehog manners, and prick all who approach them. Hedgehogs are good roasted, but nobody thinks of embracing one in its natural state. No

one doubts that a moderate sense of tact would alter this.

The tact of consideration for others—in the respect of personal courtesies—goes a long way in politics, as in social life. The effect of the want of it Lord Lytton depicts in his 'New Timon' in describing Lord John Russell:—

> How formed to lead, if not too proud to please,
> His fame would fire you, but his manners freeze;
> Like or dislike, he does not care a jot,
> He wants your vote, but your affections not;
> Yet human hearts need sun, as well as oats,—
> So cold a climate plays the deuce with votes;
> And while his doctrines ripen day by day,
> His frost-bit party pines itself away.

Public geniality had been good policy. Lord Lytton measured political duty by the standard of fashion, which regulates votes, not by principle, but by the courtesies of ministers. That Lord Russell had amenity of manners when duties of State left him leisure, is proved by his light-hearted and changeless friendship for men like Thomas Moore and Leigh Hunt, whose spirits were all sunshine.

Lately, when a distinguished peer explained a passage in a speech which was construed against him by adversaries, Mr Courtney said a man might do three things. 'The first was to stick to the assertion. Any fool could do that: but all the same, very few fools did. Second, he might say openly that when he came to reflect he found that his words went further than his thoughts. That was the heroic method. The third way was not withdrawing the words but attenuating the meaning.' The best tact in a difficulty of misapprehension is frankness—substituting unmistakable words.

Everybody knows the difference between things said or done anyhow, and said or done with consideration.

> Hearts in love use their own tongues;
> Let every eye negotiate for itself,
> And trust no agent.

Shakespeare understood tact in love.

Everyone has tact, more or less, when they are interested —and reflection and good sense will make it an acquisition. It has been well said that no one learns to think by getting rules for thinking, but by getting materials for thought.

CHAPTER XVII

CONTINGENCIES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

It is of no mean importance to an orator or speaker, who is invited to address a meeting, to make himself acquainted how that meeting is likely to be conducted, and who are announced, or are likely, to address it. If there are many speakers, he who speaks first, or second, or at any time, must be brief, in courtesy to others. If the speakers are not brief, the orator who has decided upon and arranged the order of his arguments, will find that he has to drop out, one by one, points he deems important. It is the duty of a chairman to take care that the meeting—unless one of unusual importance in the eyes of the auditors—should not exceed two or two and a half hours. It is the duty of the chairman to see the list of speakers invited to address the meeting, and arrange with the convenors of the meeting what time should be given to each, and notify to each that when that time is nearly up he will make known the same to him. Not one chairman in ten ever does this, nor reflects that, as the audience is responsible to him for maintaining order in the meeting, he is responsible to the audience for keeping time on the platform. For want of this thought half an hour of time is commonly wasted, which to a meeting of five hundred persons means a loss of twenty-five days of ten hours each. In fact, meetings are frequently prolonged till eleven o'clock, which might have been concluded at ten, which to an audience of a thousand persons implies a loss

of fifty working days of ten hours. This needless extension of the duration of the meeting means the adulteration of the proceedings, by prolixity, decrease of animation, and weariness to hearers, who become less inclined to attend meetings of which no one knows when they will end. The speaker who is called upon late should understand these contingencies, and take them into account by speaking with what directness and energy he can. I have heard Mr Bright kindle a fire of enthusiasm at a Birmingham meeting which was breaking up late and listlessly. But this is only possible to orators of the type of those who Mark Antony said once stirred the stones of Rome. Under such circumstances the ordinary speaker would be ineffectual; and late speakers at exhausted meetings will do well to say little or nothing—for a speech which would be successful when the meeting was fresh or unwearied, will command no attention later.

Sometimes a special paper is read at a meeting, under an announcement that no paper is to exceed twenty minutes in length. It will probably extend to forty or fifty minutes; and those who gave the pledge that twenty minutes should be its limit will actually print the extended paper and deliver it to the appointed reader, although they see that no one could gabble through it audibly in the prescribed period. Thus the succeeding commenters on the paper confront an assembly of wearied and baffled listeners, who have failed to retain its excess of matter in their minds. It is well that succeeding speakers understand this, lest they interpret the listlessness of the hearers as indifference to them. There is another liability from which a speaker whose voice is not loud must protect himself, by profiting from what he may know of the vocal capacity of others likely to precede him. If he is allotted to follow a Boanerges (a son of thunder) of the platform, the contrast will be against him—say what he will. But if he speaks before them he will be heard on his merits.

Frequently, a public meeting is called to consider and discuss some question of importance. Then the trouble is

cast upon the chairman of discerning what the main point or points are which he should state to the meeting—since it is his duty to see that speakers keep to them. Anyone intending to speak should get clear ideas on the subject himself, since he will speak most effectively who knows what the question is and keeps to it. The business of those who speak at conference or discussion is to consider alone the question stated by the chairman or other responsible person —the reader of a paper or the opener of the question—and not the speeches of others, except so far as they relate to the main point at issue. A speaker who understands these things can attain ascendency in the meeting, for all are ready to applaud anyone who sees clearly, clears up confusion, and leads distracted public attention back to the point.

When a speech or lecture is thrown open to criticism, each critic commonly expects to occupy the same time as the speaker, which often prevents more than one being heard in reply. In co-operative meetings this is prudently prevented by limiting the time of each speaker. It is not the work of any one speaker, but the work of many, to appraise and comment upon a whole lecture or paper, and each critic should select a leading point, and ten minutes would afford time for an effective objection if one could be raised. A speaker, therefore, who has talent by which he can advance a cause, or add to the public information, should seek, beforehand, conditions which give him a fair opportunity consistent with the fair chances of others.

At public meetings, where opposing parties often struggle to be heard, confusion, delay and ill-feeling might be obviated by each party pre-appointing a representative of ability, in whom confidence could be reposed, to speak on their behalf, and by those calling the meeting being made acquainted with and consenting to the arrangement—the views of half a dozen parties could be advocated, where the views of one are often heard but inadequately and impatiently now.

Sometimes a speaker is confused and disconcerted at a public meeting by hearing loud calls for another person to speak, and thinks—as I have known a reverend orator do—the audience are impatient with him and want to hear some one else. All the while it was the plot of an ambitious publicist, who had personal admirers whom he besought to attend meetings and call for him, giving the impression that he was in public demand. There is the story of the auditor, at an American meeting, who kept calling, 'Mr Corkles; let Mr Corkles speak.' At length the Chairman said, 'Can't you be quiet? Mr Corkles is now speaking.' 'That Mr Corkles?' said the astonished interrupter, 'why, that is the man who gave me a half-dollar to holler out his name.'

A case occurred at a northern meeting some time ago, where the hall was so crowded that those wedged far in wished they were outside. One man who tried in vain to make his way to the door, and for whom no one would make an opening, began to call out, 'What did Mr Gladstone say? What *did* Mr Gladstone say?' until the speaker on the platform could not be heard and the audience were incensed. Whereupon cries arose, 'Turn him out,' and the man so anxious to hear 'what Mr Gladstone said,' was turned out. When one who had assisted in his ejection said to him, '*What* was it Mr Gladstone said?' 'I have no idea,' was the answer. 'Then why did you call out?' The reply was, 'Because I wanted to get out; when by my becoming an interrupter everybody made way for me.' If the arts and expedients of public meetings are understood by a speaker, he will not be needlessly perturbed by interruptions. Many persons cry out whose object is not at once apparent, and whose intentions are not at all implied in what they say.

Public meetings in the country, and in the town also, are conducted on the crudest principles. If many men were disposed to take part in the meeting, it would be impossible

that any business could be transacted under several days. The assumption that *every* man has a right to be heard could not be acted upon if half who usually attend public meetings were to enforce that 'right.' In Saxon days, when a public meeting consisted of a small number of persons under a tree, every one having the right to speak caused no inconvenience. It is strange that this right should remain in force after 1000 years, when public meetings consist of 30,000 persons, as was the case at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, when Mr Gladstone spoke there. Had each person present claimed the right to be heard, and insisted on it, the meeting had lasted six months.

CHAPTER XVIII

WRITING FOR THE PRESS

EVERY public speaker or debater is likely, sooner or later, to come in contact with the press. He will need it to assist in making known his view, or in vindicating himself against the adverse criticisms of opponents, or in correcting erroneous reports of what he has said. Even John Arthur Roebuck, the most direct speaker of his day, had to do this. Even Mr Cobden, whom it was difficult to misconstrue or misunderstand, had to do this. Even Mr Gladstone, the most circumambient speaker of all—that is, he travels all round his main idea, and not only explains it, but illustrates its purport—has had to write to the press, from time to time, in vindication of his meaning. Therefore humbler speakers, who may one day be publicists, may be interested in knowing something of the art of communicating to the press, with fewer of those disappointments usually ascribed to editorial malevolence or neglect of rising genius, when the fault is in the writer.

Every attempt at expressing opinion by the pen, however ill it may succeed, is a part of the process of self-education, and often the only mode available to the poor. Whatever shall render this more practicable and common among the people does good, and to this end a few rules are submitted for the guidance of correspondents unaccustomed to write to the press. Literature is a republic where all eminence is honourable, where none can

attain distinction save by effort and patience, which are the chief forces of genius. But by reason of the necessary conditions of admission being overlooked, many sustain disappointment, which to them is inexplicable. The conditions, which are very simple, I have heretofore expressed for students thus:—

1. Use large note-size paper, because a larger sheet covers the printer's case, and hinders his work. 2. Do not write on the back of the paper, as while one side is being 'set up' what is written on the back cannot be 'gone on with.' 3. Write with *dark-black* ink, for an editor will read with reluctance what he sees with difficulty, and the compositor, for the same reason, will dislike to set it up. 4. Always write a plain, bold hand; if you send an undistinguishable scrawl, it will be thrown aside until the editor has leisure to make it out, which may not be until the 'interest of the article has passed away,' and it may be too late to print it. 5. Remember, that whatever gives an editor trouble at his desk, may double expense in the printing office; the printers and readers waste time in deciphering bad MS., and out of any failure in interpretation commonly grows a charge against the journal for 'misrepresenting' the writer. 6. If you know that the editor will take any trouble to oblige you, and you have no scruples, give him any trouble you please. If you are rich, and can send the printers a guinea for making out your letter, you may scrawl like a gentleman. If you have a great name, so that the responsibility of anything you write will attach to yourself and not reflect on the paper, express yourself how you will; you may scribble with a pin on butter paper, and the editor will try to make it out. But if the editor is under no obligation to you, if you have no guineas to spare, if you are not so popular that anything must be printed that bears your name, you had better cleave to good sense, good taste, clear expression, black ink, and a plain hand. If you cannot write

plainly, have your communication copied by someone who can. Never fear that an editor will omit or abridge your communication without cause. If it have value he will be glad of it. If it contains only relevant facts, and be, as all relations of facts ought to be, briefly told, without declamation, digression, or personal imputation on others, it will be impossible to abridge it. A well-written letter or narrative is incapable of being altered or abbreviated for the better. Hardly anything is ever refused, if well written. The artistic taste of an editor for the literary perfection of his paper is a ruling passion, stronger than personal feeling or political prejudice, and next to the love of fair play he is attracted by a communication which is well expressed.

It is common with new writers to put all they have to say into one sentence. A long sentence is most difficult to construct clearly — and that is what the inexperienced first attempt, through not knowing how to separate distinct pieces of information. After a while, young writers discover that every separate idea should be separately expressed, in separate sentences. Long sentences are wearisome to read, difficult to understand, and almost impossible to correct. This fault in writing prevents many useful articles from appearing in print. Editors cannot find time for re-writing such papers. It is a common complaint that editors strike out the 'best parts' of papers sent them. They do this seldomer than is supposed, for editors in their own interest are commonly good judges of the 'best parts' of letters or other communications calculated to interest or allure readers.

In Mavor's *History of Greece*, which used to be a common school-book for young students, may be read in Chapter XI. such sentences as the following:—

'Nicias asked merely for quarter for the miserable remains of his troops who had not perished in the Asinarius, or

upon its banks.' No one need be at loss to discover the superfluous information given that Nicias asked for quarter for 'those who had not perished.' No general asks for quarter for those who have. The same writer tells us that 'discipline yielded to the pressure of necessity. They hurried down the steep in confusion and without order, and trod one another to death in the stream.' Necessity is all 'pressure,' and it is not necessary to specify the essence of a thing as operative. It is needless to tell us, that men all 'in confusion' 'were without order.' It had been better for Mavor's History and his own reputation had some editor put his pen through his superfluous words.

When we discover a number of emphatic words employed, we know the writer or speaker has no sense of measure. 'When Rigby,' says Disraeli, 'was of opinion he had made a point, you may be sure the hit was in italics, that last resource of the forcible feebles.' 'Ordinarily,' says Schlegel, 'men entertain a very erroneous notion of criticism, and understand by it nothing more than a certain shrewdness in detecting and exposing the faults of a work of art. Art cannot exist without nature, and man can give nothing to his fellow-men but himself.' This explains all the student need take to heart at this point. If he will give 'himself,' in his communications he will be interesting. Cobbett said, 'the secret of good writing is to talk with the pen.' If a writer will put down his sentences in the free, natural, unaffected way he would speak them to a friend in talking over what interests him, he will find favour with editors. If a man is dull, and his dulness is absolute, perfect, complete in all its parts, and coherent—he will often obtain a hearing, like Mirabeau's head, whose entire ugliness endered it alluring. Perfect stupidity or relevant, unaffected good sense will win attention. It is the mixture that gives editors trouble. Delane, the editor of the *Times*, once struck out a weak sentence and an irrelevant remark in a letter of mine to my great advantage. I was very grateful

for it. But it is rarely an editor will do this. The writer is almost sure to charge him with emasculating his communication, and rather than risk this, the editor leaves out the letter.

One thing the correspondent of a newspaper should bear in mind is—not to make any dishonouring imputation upon the persons he writes about. Even if he thinks he has been wilfully misrepresented by an adversary, a reporter, or by the editor, he had better not say so. First, because he can hardly ever be sure of it. Second, because he can hardly ever prove it, and it is a serious thing to make a charge of dishonourable wilfulness, if you cannot prove it. Third, because human capacity for seeing things the wrong way, and drawing the wrong conclusion from the plainest premises, is so universally diffused among mankind that you can hardly ever be quite sure that a perversion of what has been said is really wilful. The Dutch proverb says, 'It is misapprehension which brings lies to town.' Now, the power of honest misapprehension is very strong in well-meaning people. Besides, the editor has to be consulted. To publish a personal imputation might render him liable to an action, and he may not like it. If he inserted the imputation, the person assailed might claim the right of reply and might give his assailant 'as good as he had sent,' which might convert the journal into a bear garden, and the readers might not like this.

Finally, it may be worth while to consider what kind of person the editor to whom you write is. If he has strong prejudices, it is wisdom to say as little as you can which may excite him, and as much as you can which may conciliate him. If you wanted to borrow half a guinea you would not think of asking the first person you met, but would cast about among all the persons you knew for one likely to have half a guinea about him, and give some thought as to the best way of addressing him likeliest to induce him to part with the same. An editor's compliance

with your request may in one way or other, sooner or later, be worth many half-guineas to the writer. Thus editors are worthy of consideration in the way in which they are addressed, and especially in the nature and expression of the communication sent to them.

CHAPTER XIX

SOURCES OF TASTE

TASTE is a part of good oratory, and is no mean equipment of a great speaker. No man goes far in a speech without betraying to the auditor his coarseness or refinement. A man may be an orator without taste and command applause, but he never commands respect without it. An orator may ruin a cause by a single phrase. A secretary of a great political party in Manchester lost the election of its candidates by a single expression which wounded the self-respect of the city. When Mr Blaine was presidential candidate in America his election was lost by one of his advocates, the Rev. Dr Burchard, who had coined an alliterative phrase, which he thought much of, but had never thought how it would be regarded by the great assembly to whom it was addressed. The publicans, the Catholics, and the southern party had been won over in sufficient numbers to give Blaine a majority, when Dr Burchard must say that Blaine would be victorious over 'Rum, Romanism and Rebellion.' This rendered the publicans furious, the Catholics indignant, the south vindictive; and so Blaine's majority was dissolved by this odious and high-sounding phrase. The phrase cited was said to be 'bad taste.' But bad taste means bad judgment, bad knowledge, and disregard for the feelings of others. To assail the self-respect of adversaries is not an act of taste—it is an outrage. Taste is preference and selection

in personal things, of that which neither annoys nor harms others. Persons who seek to excuse or escape the responsibility of the preferences of themselves or others, will say 'there is no accounting for tastes.' Yes, there is. Taste has its roots in habit, in education, and has its laws and standards. Town Councillors who put and keep up hideousness in the town they are appointed to improve, no sooner visit the Continent than they acquire taste in streets and picturesque open spaces. Space is the first condition of a fine street. If dignity cannot be given to a town, gleams of brightness may be let into it, and it need not have monotonousness perpetuated in it. Bad taste in towns can be accounted for. It is owing to the ignorance of its chief inhabitants.

Taste in writing has its laws. There must be distinctness. There is writing so elegant that it cannot be read. The first law of writing is that every letter is distinct in form from every other letter. One form of letter should be decided on and not departed from. Neatness and plainness follow. Taste in writing is founded on the standard that it can be read easily without trouble or effort; and no single letter in it can be mistaken for any other letter.

Taste in truth depends on accuracy, clearness, vitalness—that is its usefulness and relevance.

Taste in books is determined by width of margin, clearness of type, strength and durability of paper, apart from the binding and contents.

Taste in mind has conditions of vividness, perspicacity, force, the sense of proportion, veracity and integrity.

Taste in manliness has reference to symmetry, grace of movement, resilience and health.

Taste, therefore, is not wantonness of choice, but depends on knowledge; and there would be better taste were it understood that the quality of taste is the outward and visible sign by which a person betrays his attainments.

Taste in oratory has also its laws and conditions. One is

that no illustration should be used without reference to the subject. If the object is to lower the pretension of a person or thing, the illustration should do it. If the purpose is to exalt, the illustration should elevate it. I knew an agitator of no mean qualities of mind defend himself before a judge, by quoting the simile of Bishop Warburton, who compared critics of his way of thinking, to swine, which, though not popular animals, were yet useful in routing up acorns and fertilising trees. For the defendant to compare himself to unsavoury swine was to confirm the court in its unpleasant impression of him; whereas his interest was to exalt the character and services of the agitator, whom he might have compared to the explorer, who risks his reputation, and not unfrequently life or liberty, to discover new advantages or opportunities for his countrymen, who may never know him, and if they do neither regard him nor requite him. Such an illustration would be in good taste, having regard to the defendant's purpose. The first illustration was in bad taste, and he who used it, who was an orator by nature, would have seen it to be so had he reflected; by which I want the student to see that one of the conditions of good taste is reflection.

Proportion is also a form of taste. To those who have that sense in art or eloquence, disproportion is an outrage, and he who is guilty of it loses the power of being impressive. Measured and relevant words intensify rather than decrease vividness and imagination. We are told of Dante that, great and various as his power of creating pictures in a few lines unquestionably was, he owed that power to the directness, simplicity and intensity of his language. In him 'the invisible becomes visible,' as Leigh Hunt said,—'darkness becomes palpable, silence describes a character, a word acts as a flash of lightning, which displays some gloomy neighbourhood where a tower is standing, with dreadful faces at the window.'

'In good prose' (says Frederic Schlegel) 'every word should be underlined'—that is, every word should be the

right word; and then no word would be righter than another. It comes to the same thing, where all words are italics, one may as well use roman. There are no italics in Plato, because there are no unnecessary or unimportant words. It is a sign of taste in writing or speaking that it needs few italicised or emphatic words.

Taste is also part of the art of commendation. Most persons carry a stock of hate on hand. Censure is always ready-made. But praise is a different thing. It only proceeds from generosity or gratitude, and those are deliberate sentiments. A man may rage without art, but he cannot applaud sensibly without it. This is why the quality of a man's mind is more easily seen in his praise than in his censure. Defamation shows his feeling, praise his understanding; and, if he wishes to give an idea of his strong sense of a service rendered him, he can best do it by showing that he accurately estimates it, and this is the only praise anyone, not vain, cares to receive, or which is an actual tribute to him who receives it. Taste in praise is rare. Its principle is that there can be no praise except from equals or superiors who can measure the difficulties overcome in the attainment of excellence. Inferiors may admire. Mrs Barbauld recognised this in her admirable line in reference to the inadequacy of the creature professing to praise the Creator. She, as Hooker had suggested before her, wrote—

Silence is our least injurious praise.

Taste in manners is no mean attainment, and goes for much in the public estimation of the orator. 'Do manners matter?' ask some who have not thought much upon the subject. There is reason to think manners do matter. The proverb says, 'Manners make the man.' No careful speaking man would say this. There are persons whose manners are coarse or brutal at times, quick, hasty, abrupt and inconsiderate, who are yet tender, full of feeling for others

and generous. There are others who are all suavity and courtesy, whose souls are base and selfish. Men must be judged by what they do, as well as by what they seem. Nevertheless, good manners are good as far as they go. Everybody knows this; even those who affect to despise courtesy as servility or mealy-mouthedness, are quickly stung themselves and irritated and implacable, if they find themselves treated with discourtesy. Bad manners give a bad impression of a good heart, and a bad presentment gives a bad impression of a good cause.

A definition should not only help you to find a thing, but help you to know it when you do find it. How many definitions of politeness and good breeding have been given, but who has defined it in such words of light and guidance as Swift, who said, 'Whoever makes the fewest persons uneasy, is the bes bred man in the company.'

Politeness is thoughtfulness for others and forgetfulness of yourself. Good breeding is consideration for the pleasure of those about you. It is the same in palace and cottage; in the highest assembly and the lowest; in Parliament or a town council; in pulpit or on the platform; at the fireside or in the street. It is possible to all in the workshops, in the mill, or in the store. It is not rank, it is not wealth, it is not learning that constitutes good breeding. Good breeding is good feeling, and it is good taste to remember it.

CHAPTER XX

PREMEDITATION IN SPEECH

PREMEDITATION is but thoughtfulness in speech, and he who speaks without thought will soon have hearers who will pay him no attention. He who speaks without preparing what he will say is but a gambler in oratory who trusts to the right dice turning up as he proceeds. Preparation is premeditation.

A book is not written—a poem is not written, a play is not planned, a picture is not painted—without premeditation. If they are, the book will lack arrangement—the poem will be wanting in grace, the play will be deficient in construction, and the picture will not be the best expression of the artist's powers. Of course there are exceptions. Inspiration may come like a flash of light and reveal a remarkable design; but though premeditation is not in it, and could not produce it, meditation alone can perfect the design. Speeches are the better for premeditation. Even sermons are improved by it. A young candidate for holy orders had to preach his trial sermon before Archbishop Whately. That experienced prelate discovered crudeness of arrangement and want of finish of expression in what he heard, and asked the young preacher whether he was accustomed to prepare his discourses. He answered that he was not, as he trusted to the divine promise—'In the hour in which you have to speak it shall be given to you what you shall say.' The Archbishop remarked that that promise was

given to the Apostles, and unless he was sure that he was an apostle it might not apply to him. The candidate had trust and piety, without which preaching is ineffective, but the shrewd prelate knew that without preparation piety could seldom commend its cause in the pulpit.

Orators of renown have not disdained to premeditate their speeches, both in Parliament and on the platform. Porson said that 'Pitt carefully considered his sentences before he uttered them, but that Fox threw himself into the middle of his, and left it to God Almighty to get him out again.' But those who lack the splendid confidence of Charles James Fox had better acquire that sureness in speech affirmed of a certain French speaker, whose sentences were like cats—when showered into the air they found their feet without trouble.

There is reason to believe that the greatest masters of oratory have been sensible of the value of, and have practised premeditation. It is only the young, would-be speaker who expects to be great without effort, or whose vanity leads him to impose upon others the belief that he is perfect at will—and needs no preparation. One of the biographers of Canning tells us that he was himself fastidious to excess about the slightest terms of expression. He would correct his speeches and amend their verbal graces. He was not singular in this. Burke, whom he is said to have closely studied, did the same. Sheridan always prepared his speeches; the highly-wrought passages in his speech on the Hastings impeachment were written beforehand and committed to memory, and the differences were so marked that the audience could readily distinguish between the extemporaneous passages and those that were premeditated. Canning's alterations were frequently so minute and extensive that the printers found it easier to recompose the matter afresh in type than to correct it. This is to be amendment mad. Frugality in revision is as much a mark of sanity as frugality in metaphors.

Oratory in this country is less good than it would be, owing to the foolish contempt for 'cut-and-dried speeches,' till it has come to be considered a sign of weakness for a man to think before he speaks. Those who travelled with Sheil when he spoke in the country, could hear him in the morning repeating his intended oration in his dressing-room. Disraeli said in the *Young Duke*, 'Mr Sheil's speech in Kent was a fine oration, and the boobies who taunted him for having got it by rote were not aware that in doing so he wisely followed the example of Pericles, Demosthenes, Lycias, Isocrates, Hortensius, Cicero, Cæsar, and every great orator of antiquity.'

The orations or compositions of Demosthenes are not distinguished by ornament and splendour. It is an energy of thought which raises him above his species. He appears not to attend to words, but to things. We forget the orator, and think of the subject. Demades says, that Demosthenes spoke better on some few occasions when he spoke unpremeditatedly. Probably he spoke well in some of these instances, but it was the result of power acquired by the habit of preparation. As a general rule, he who thinks twice before speaking once, will speak twice the better for it when he has no time to think.

When Macaulay was about to address the House of Commons his anxious and restless manner betrayed his intention. Still, he was regardless of the laugh of the witlings, and continued intent on his effort. This is the real courage that does things well—the courage that is neither laughed nor frowned from its purpose.

Macaulay spoke early in the evening, before the jarring of the debate confused him, or long attention enfeebled his powers. When the great Lord Chatham was to appear in public he took much pains about his dress, and in his last speech he arranged his flannels in graceful folds. He was carried into the House when near death. It need not then detract from our respect for Erskine, says Lord Campbell

in his *Lives of the Chancellors*, that 'when he went down into the country on special retainers, he examined the court the night before the trial, in order to select the most advantageous place for addressing the jury. On the cause being called, the crowded audience were perhaps kept waiting a few minutes before the celebrated stranger made his appearance; a particularly nice wig, and a pair of new yellow gloves, distinguished and embellished his person beyond the ordinary costume of the barrister of the circuit.'

Amid the applause bestowed upon premeditation, it would not be just to omit the ridicule with which it has been visited by Sydney Smith, who said, 'It is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be very powerfully affected. What can be more ludicrous than an orator delivering stale indignation and fervour of a week old? turning over whole pages of violent passions, written out in German text; reading the trophes and apostrophes into which he is hurried by the ardour of his mind, and so affected at a preconcerted line and page that he is unable to proceed any further.' True, 'it is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be very powerfully affected.' But nature is always fresh; and he who reproduces nature will always be effective. Macready never stabbed his daughter to preserve her honour. Yet every man was moved at his Virginius. As Othello, Macready's 'indignation' at Iago was a glory of the stage for years; yet men were as much affected by its intensity as on the first day when he displayed it. The speech of Antony over the dead body of Cæsar was 'written in German text' in the days of Queen Elizabeth; it was 'cut and dried' near three hundred years ago. Yet, whatever our satirical canon may say, the idea of premeditation is extinguished by the charm of perfect expression, and the passion excited, in those capable of realising its fitness and force, is fresh to every generation of hearers. Lord Brougham wrote out the last passages of his speech for the defence

of Queen Caroline nine times. Its effect was a triumph of preparation.

When Dr Black had a class of young men at the Reform Association, he disciplined them in rhetoric by causing each to marshal his discourse on a chosen theme under certain heads. These once gone over, he required these heads to be spoken upon by inversion, beginning probably with the peroration, continuing with the argument, taking afterwards the statement, or other division belonging to the theme, and ending with the exordium. Not until a member could speak well on any one head, and in any order, was he deemed master of his subject.

Professor de Morgan remarks in a paper which he furnished to Dr Lardner's *Geometry*, that to number the parts of propositions is the only way of understanding them. To identify details and grasp the whole are the two indices of proficiency.

Margaret Fuller relates how backwoodsmen of America, whom she visited, would sit by their log-fire at night and tell 'rough pieces out of their lives.' This disintegration of events by men strong of will and full of matter, in order to set distinct parts before auditors, is a sign of that power which we call mastery. Ability is, always, power under command.

Elsewhere, in describing Colonel John Hay's account of Abraham Lincoln, I have said:—It has never been made so clear in what way, and by what qualities, the gaunt rail-splitter attained the Presidency. His speeches show that he excelled in seeing all the way into a State problem and in power of perfect statement of it. His account of his self-education is one by which many students may profit to-day. Lincoln said, 'When a child I used to get irritated when anyone talked to me in a way I could not understand; that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since.' He 'hunted after the idea in a dark saying' until he thought he had caught it, and was not satisfied until he

had put it into language 'plain enough for any boy to understand it.' That was Lincoln's answer as to how he acquired the art of 'putting things'—which does not come by nature, but by education. In studying law-books, he came upon the word 'demonstrate,' which excited his curiosity, and he studied Euclid until he had mastered what demonstration meant in geometry, and afterwards applied the knowledge in argument.

Gather relevant knowledge anywhere. Every man is indebted to others for much information. No man knows everything by his own research and verification, unless it be Mr Gladstone.

Preparation is power; nor does the hesitation which the desire of exactness sometimes begets, tell against the speaker. Mr T. P. O'Connor says of Mr Sexton on a famous occasion:—

'He spoke, I say, slowly—but at the same time it was evident that he had his mind well fixed on the end which he wished to reach. Nothing adds so much to the effectiveness of oratory as the sense that the man who is addressing you, is thinking at the very moment he is speaking. You have the sense of watching the visible working of his inner mind; and you are far more deeply impressed than by the glib facility which does not pause, does not stumble, does not hesitate, because the speaker does not stop to think.'

Humanity is the instrument upon which the orator has to play, and he had better learn what notes it is capable of before he begins. Experience in Parliament and on the platform will soon teach any observer, that few speakers are worth hearing who do not prepare, and prepare carefully, what they want to say.

In writing we may be brief and suggestive, because each word remains to be pondered over. But that which falls on the ear not being so permanent as that which falls on paper, fulness, premeditation and varied treatment are indispensable.

CHAPTER XXI

REPETITION A NECESSITY

REPETITION has its uses and necessities, and is excellent in a speaker, provided he does not repeat himself. Few persons, as a rule, ever understand any new thing on its first saying. It is by many repetitions in many forms that a new idea is comprehended. Leaders of opinion, even of the soberer sort, have within my knowledge been so captivated by reason, as to overlook the conditions under which reason acts. They have been so moved when the reason of a thing has become plain to them, that they have had no doubt that all men could be at once convinced by the same exposition of the facts. The processes of education should have taught them differently. First elementary principles are acquired, then successive stages are reached until the whole subject looms before the mind, impressing it by its completeness. Every step, though with less precision, like the steps in Euclid, recalls and repeats what has gone before.

The repetition here explained and commended is variation in statement, and means presenting the same idea under different aspects. Every important principle has many relations and applications. To trace these and show them is to recall the cardinal idea without wearying the hearer, who, indeed, is often charmed with the range of view which reveals the same fact operative in divers circumstances. Bishop Hall said of moderation that it was the

'silken string running through the pearl chain of all our virtues.' To trace this silken cord wherever it runs in the channels of possible applications, is the kind of repetition meant in this chapter. It keeps one idea always in view under a brilliant diversity which instructs and charms. There is a 'damnable iteration' spoken of in the play. That is when the same thing is said in the same way in season and out of season. He who is always obtruding the same view upon others soon becomes tiresome, and people avoid him and his subject. Repetition as a part of rhetoric is an art, and is limited to varying attention on an essential point until it is understood, and no further. To go further is to provoke resentment and dislike. Robert Owen laid down five fundamental facts and twenty laws of human nature. There were a million ideas in them, but because he often repeated them in the same language, unrelieved by variation and illustration, he was regarded as a man of 'one idea.' Another generation who may look into his works, sayings and designs, will be of a different opinion. Splendid enthusiasts forget themselves in their desire to serve others, and leave it to posterity, who will reap the advantages of their disinterested devotion, to do them justice—if so minded.

History acquaints us with the wondrous effects of eloquence upon multitudes, carried away to far crusades by the oratory of a hermit. Even in grave political assemblies and parliaments, a great speaker can persuade so that majorities hang upon his words. Persuasion is a task of skill. 'Inculcating an idea—disseminating it—winning conviction first, and inspiring enthusiasm after—is often like the dropping of a seed, and patiently waiting till it grows—fostering it, watering it, protecting it, until it expands into stem and flower. Such,' said the *Daily News* years ago, 'is the political eloquence of modern times. He who discovered it, and who practises it, is—Richard Cobden.' It is hardly true that Mr Cobden 'discovered' it. He was its

greatest illustrator, but it had grown with the growth and commercial character of the nation. Long before Cobden's time, the magic fancy of Burke, the ceaseless sentences of Pitt, the thundering declamation of Fox, all had like features in lesser degree. The king of American transcendentalists has said, that 'eloquence at first and last must still be at bottom a statement of facts. All audiences soon ask, "What is he driving at?" and if this man does not stand for anything, he will be deserted.' And he will be deserted unless his hearers see the same facts stand firm in different lights.

Matthew Arnold, says a writer in *Scribner*, had a repellent endowment of one kind of courage—'the courage of repeating yourself over and over again.' It is a sound forensic maxim—tell a judge twice whatever you want him to hear; tell a special jury thrice, and a common jury half a dozen times, the view of a case you wish them to entertain. 'Mr Arnold treated the middle-class as a common jury, and addressed them with remorseless iteration.' In introducing a new topic to an auditory, it is well to repeat the main idea in different forms of expression, each in itself brief, but altogether affording an expansion of the sense to be conveyed, and detaining the mind upon it.

It is given to well-calculated reiteration to accomplish that which is denied to power. The reputation of Robespierre—now breaking a little through clouds of calumny as dense and dark as ever obscured human name—is a striking illustration of the omnipotence of repetition. The most eloquent of his vindicators has thus sketched his triumph:—

'Still deeper in the shade, and behind the chief of the National Assembly, a man almost unknown began to move. Agitated by uneasy thoughts, which seemed to forbid him to be silent, he spoke on all occasions, and attacked all speakers, indifferently, including Mirabeau himself. Driven from the tribune, he ascended it next day; overwhelmed

with sarcasm, coughed down, disowned by all parties, lost amongst the eminent champions who fixed public attention, he was never dispirited. It might have been said, that an inward and prophetic genius revealed to him the omnipotence of a firm will and unwearied patience, and that an inward voice said to him, "These men who despise thee are thine: all the changes of this revolution, which now will not deign to look upon thee, will eventually terminate in thee, for thou hast placed thyself in the way like the inevitable excess in which all impulse ends."'

Robespierre had power of thought, distinction of person; for, though a democrat, he was scrupulously careful of his dress and of his language, which was never mean or inexact. Had he not had unusual qualities, his pertinacity had done nothing for him. He had sunk into obscurity, or had been remembered only as an irrepressible fool. His relevance of thought, and his studied precision of expression, were the qualities which at last commanded attention.

In his *Historical Characters*, Sir H. L. Bulwer (Lord Dalling) remarks:—'Napoleon complained of Talleyrand's repetitions, saying he could not conceive how people found M. de Talleyrand eloquent, "Il tournait toujours sur la même idée."' (He always turned round the same idea.) But this was a system with him, as with Fox, who laid it down as the great principle for an orator who wished to leave an impression.

When the columns of the *Times* were crowded for five days with reports of the trial of Palmer of Rugeley, the leading article upon it, on the sixth day, when the trial had ended, gave a reiterated account of the fat, rascally, horse-racing surgeon who poisoned Cook, an article which the busy man could understand, though he had never read a line of the reports. The article was like a Scotch house—self-contained. It was lighted up, as it were, by freshness of statement, still but a reflection of facts the readers had seen day by day, but could not recall in the same order or

with the same effect. One object of repetition is to bring into view all that is necessary to present a complete case to auditor or reader. It is of no use listening to a speaker or reading an author, if you require first to hear or read some one else to understand him.

Reiteration, without tiresomeness, is not only an advantage but a force. One who knew all things pertaining to the art of persuasion, wrote:—

> Truth can never be confirmed enough,
> Though doubt itself were dead.

CHAPTER XXII

SIGNS OF MASTERY

DR BLACK'S test of mastery (cited in Chapter XX.) is excellent, though arduous. But one instance alone is not sufficient to impress the reader with the advantages of mastery and the signs thereof.

A speaker, like an actor, is liable to the criticism of a casual hearing. The auditor who hears you but once may form an opinion of you for ever. Against this there is no protection but in acquiring such a mastery over your powers as to be able always to exert them well, and to impress a hearer, in some respect or other, at every appearance. He, therefore, who has a reputation to acquire or preserve, will keep silence whenever he is in danger of speaking indifferently. He will practise in private, and train himself so perseveringly, that perfection will become a second nature, and the power of proficiency never desert him. Those who think genius is an impulsive effort that costs nothing, little dream with what patience the professional singer or actor observes regular habits and judicious exercise; how he treasures all his strength and power for the hour of appearance. There must, of course, be natural power of personation in an actor, a fine voice in a singer, and that instinctive aptitude and capacity of excellence which men call genius, or no cultivation will produce more than talent. At the same time, the highest natural endowment of genius will spend itself without effect, and

perish devoid of renown, unless application and study develop and mature it.

The triumphs of application are as remarkable as the triumph of genius. One day, an acquaintance, in speaking of Curran's eloquence, happened to observe that it must have been born with him.

"Indeed, my dear sir," replied Curran, "it was not; it was born three-and-twenty years and some months after me. When I was at the Temple a few of us formed a little debating club. Upon the first night of meeting I attended, my foolish heart throbbing with the anticipated honour of being styled 'the learned member that opened the debate,' or 'the very eloquent gentleman who has just sat down,' I stood up—the question was the Catholic claims or the slave trade, I now forget which, but the difference, you know, was never very obvious—my mind was stored with about a folio volume of matter, but I wanted a preface, and for want of a preface the volume was never published. I stood up, trembling through every fibre; but, remembering that in this I was but imitating Tully, I took courage, and had actually proceeded as far as 'Mr Chairman,' when, to my astonishment and terror, I perceived that every eye was turned upon me. There were only six or seven persons present, and the room could not have contained as many more; yet was it, to my panic-struck imagination, as if I were the central object in nature, and assembled millions were gazing upon me in breathless expectation. I became dismayed and dumb. My friends cried 'Hear him!' but there was nothing to hear. My lips, indeed, went through the pantomime of articulation, but I was like the unfortunate fiddler at the fair, who, upon coming to strike up the solo that was to ravish every ear, discovered that an enemy had maliciously soaped his bow. So you see, sir, it was not born with me. However, though I was for the time silenced, I still attended our meetings with regularity, and even ventured

to accompany the others to a more ambitious theatre, the club at Temple Bar. One of them was on his legs; a fellow of whom it was difficult to decide whether he was most distinguished for the dirtiness of his person or the flippancy of his tongue—just such another as Harry Flood would have called 'the highly-gifted gentleman with the dirty cravat and greasy pantaloons.' I found this learned personage in the act of calumniating chronology by the most preposterous anachronisms. He descanted upon Demosthenes, the glory of the Roman forum; spoke of Tully as the famous contemporary and rival of Cicero; and, in the short space of one half-hour, transported the Straits of Marathon three several times to the plains of Thermopylæ. Thinking I had a right to know something of these matters, I looked at him with surprise. When our eyes met, there was something like a wager of battle in mine; upon which the erudite gentleman instantly changed his invective against antiquity into an invective against me, and concluded by a few words of friendly counsel to "orator mum, who, he doubted not, possessed wonderful talents for eloquence, although he would recommend him to show it in future by some more popular method than his silence." I followed his advice, and, I believe, not entirely without effect. So, sir, you see that to try the bird the spur must touch his blood.'

But Curran had the blood of oratory in his veins, or the spur had pricked him in vain. The pretentious ignorance of the previous speaker afforded the very 'preface' that Curran wanted to his volume. Many persons of real power of speech can never present themselves to an audience unless called upon or provoked by some egregious thing said, or incited by a sense of duty that something not said ought to be said. Then the effect will be according to the knowledge, capacity and practice of the speaker.

Curran's defect in enunciation (at school he went by the

cognomen of 'Stuttering Jack Curran') he corrected by a regular system of daily reading aloud, slowly, and with strict regard to pronunciation. His person was short, and his appearance ungraceful and without dignity. To overcome these disadvantages, he recited and studied his postures before a mirror, and adopted a method of gesticulation suited to his appearance. Besides a constant attendance at the debating clubs, he accustomed himself to extemporaneous eloquence in private, by proposing cases to himself, which he debated with the same care as if he had been addressing a jury. It was thus the great advocate won his self-possession and power.

Professor de Morgan's rule was, when he wanted a pupil to work well seven places of decimals, to practise him in working fifteen. When Malibran was introduced to Rossini, as a girl of fourteen, by her father, Garcia, she having sung a cavatina, the grand maestro said: 'Practise, mademoiselle, and you must inevitably rise to the highest point of your profession.'

Mr Vere Foster, an authority on copy-book art, remarks that 'the grand secret in teaching writing is to bestow much attention upon a little variety. The necessity of a continued repetition of the same exercise till it can be executed with correctness, cannot be too strongly insisted on. But, as this reiteration is tedious for an age so fond of novelty as that of childhood, we should not keep too close to the maxim, and by a judicious intermixture of a few slightly differing forms, contrive to fix attention and to insure repetition.' 'The method of teaching anything to children,' says Locke, 'is by repeated practice, and the same action done over and over again until they have got the habit of doing it well, a method that has so many advantages, which ever way we come to consider it, that I wonder how it could possibly be so much neglected;' but it is better for children when there is variety in it, as Pestalozzi proved. This rule of repetition is also true in elocution, for

on the verge of a new art men themselves are distrustful of their own powers.

Mastery in any art can only come by practice. When Demosthenes was asked what was the secret of success on the platform, he is said to have answered: 'Action, action, action.' But action gives no power, and Dr Clair J. Grece must be right when contending that the answer of the great orator should be translated: 'Practice, practice, practice,' for there skill comes in. A man who wishes to speak well at a moment's notice should speak every night if he has an opportunity. Preachers and barristers speak better at will than other persons.

In speaking, as one writer has observed, it has often been a matter of curious consideration, that a person will explain his views to a single individual in such terms as to force conviction in many instances, and where he fails the exposition would be just such a one as would please an audience. At the same time it is notorious that what will not convince one or two will be effective on many persons; yet when he who can succeed in the more difficult task with one or two, when he comes before an audience he is abashed, and cannot utter two consecutive sentences with propriety, energy or sense. Nevertheless, this incapacity will vanish at once under a sense of duty. John says perfect love casteth out fear; so does a sense of duty in speaking. But where the motive is not an incentive, there is no remedy for confusion of mind before an audience save practice and deliberation; practice gives confidence, and deliberation gives capacity a chance of manifesting itself —provided the assembly is not too large for the compass of the speaker's voice. No man speaks with confidence who is not sure that he is heard.

Whewell held that we are never master of anything till we do it both well and unconsciously. But there is no test of proficiency so instructive as that put by George Sand into the mouth of Porpora, in her novel of *Consuelo*.

When Consuelo, on the occasion of a trial performance, manifests some apprehension as to the result, Porpora reminds her that if there is room in her mind for misgiving as to the judgment of others, it is a proof that she is not filled with the true love of art, which would so absorb her whole thoughts as to leave her insensible to the opinion of others, and if she distrusted her own powers, it was plain they were not yet matured powers, else they could not play her false.

Mastery is manifest when we have no misgiving as to the trial of our attainments; we are then rather anxious for the opportunity and confident as to the result. In George Eliot's *Deronda* there is the little Jewess who sings for the first time undismayed before a critical assembly met to judge her capacity. On being asked why she was so unapprehensive, she answered to this effect, 'Because I knew what I could do, and because the audience, being well-informed, knew what I was doing, knew the difficulties I had overcome, and could appreciate what I did. I am never afraid of singing before those who know.'

In the first Lord Lytton's day there was a fashionable figure in society whom everybody regarded as a 'superior person.' Chancing next day to call on Lord Durham, Lytton said, 'I spent six mortal hours with Lord Spraggles (the superior person), and I don't think there is much in him.' 'Good heavens!' exclaimed Lord Durham, 'how did you find that out? Is it possible he could have—talked?' The superior person had mastered nothing, and when he spoke it was apparent.

CHAPTER XXIII

NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF ORATORY

A GREAT oration has a great subject stated in a great way; it deals with large ideas in a large manner. Each orator of mark may move in a different orbit, but he is luminous in it, and shines by a light which is his own. Mr Cobden commanded attention by force of argument based on unnoticed facts. Mr Bright was volcanic, and suggested to landlords the danger of allowing explosive materials to accumulate under them. Mr Disraeli flashed with epigram and satire. Mr Gladstone is circumambient, compelling conviction by considerations drawn from a larger field than any other man is able to survey. In each, newness of insight and force of statement are the qualities by which concurrence was won.

No one in the House of Commons could ever tell whether Disraeli had sincerity—the key of all influence in oratory. Certainly he never gave anyone the impression that he had it. He charmed, he intimidated, but never convinced adversaries. As a clever writer in the *Fortnightly* said: 'You feel that he has come from another world, and that he must be judged by the law of his domicile.' In one thing he was human; he was, as Justin M'Carthy has said, 'master of the art of epithets.' In destroying any who stood in the way of the ascendency of himself, he had real passion. Had he had it in public affairs, he had moved the heart of the nation, and kept a

lasting place there. What is it that wins for the orator public affection? It is the burning word of passion. It knows no high, no low, no rich, no poor, no citizen, no alien, no foreigner, no class, no colour. Savage and civilised, learned and illiterate (the accidents of condition) sink into insignificance when man speaks to humanity. The orator penetrates to the heart of the race. It was said of Mr Cowen in Parliament that he had the great qualities rare among orators, 'fire, colour and imagination.' He had also conviction, which alone wins adherents, or retains them when won.

John Arthur Roebuck, whose own oratory in its coherence and cogency more resembled that of Demosthenes than any other orator of his day, says, in his *History of the Whig Ministry of* 1830 :—

'The style of Lord Brougham, though vigorous and sometimes happy, was too often diffuse, loose and cumbrous, and always wanting in that exquisite accuracy, simplicity, and constantly equal and sustained force, of his more sedate and self-collected antagonist. Looking back, however, and calmly weighing the merits of these celebrated efforts of these the two most distinguished orators of that day (Lyndhurst and Brougham), we cannot, I think, fail to feel that although in Lord Lyndhurst's speech there was nothing superfluous—that all was severity—and, if I may use the expression, serenely great—yet that in the higher, I ought to say the highest excellence of impassioned reasoning, his rival (Lord Brougham) was eminently superior. The cold sagacity of Lord Lyndhurst shines steadily throughout the whole of his discourse; *but we feel no enthusiasm—we are not touched by any appeal to a generous sentiment*—we never appear to *ourselves exalted by being called upon to share in and sympathise with any large and liberal policy.* The speech of Lord Brougham produces effects of a very different description. Discursive, sometimes even trivial, it contains splendid and exciting appeals—wise and gener

ous sentiments—cogent, effective argument; and we are anxious to believe him right, because, while he attempts to satisfy the understanding, he enlists in his favour the emotions of his hearers by exhibiting an earnest solicitude for the well-being of his country and his kind.'

Lord Kames said the 'plainest man agitated with passion affects us more than the greatest speaker without it.' It is the passion of conviction which is meant. A man cannot acquire it by will. The spur of necessity will beget fervour, and interest in the welfare of others will beget convictions. But if a man has no convictions, he may as well keep silence, for he never can produce the highest effects nor any effect honourable to him. Lord Hartington was too rich to be in earnest about public affairs. He spoke half-asleep, and gave you the impression that he thought having to speak a bore, and he often bored his hearers. He had twelve famous or luxurious country seats—a fresh one every month for a change. You always heard these seats in his slothful speeches. What an audience like, is what Douglas Jerrold called the 'flesh and blood' of a speaker's thought, and they are not content unless they feel the strong bones of his meaning in great passages.

Great actors confess that they take time before stepping on the stage to possess their minds with the story, purport and génius of the play. Mrs Siddons used to stand at the wings and listen to the dialogue going on, so as to possess herself of the spirit of the piece, that when she had to appear she shared and exalted its excitement. Wordsworth said of Goethe that he was not 'inevitable enough.' Now inevitability is the finest test of oratory, both as to speech and matter. To see that a man can't help speaking immediately arrests attention, and if the matter of the speech, its ideas and expressions, appear inevitably to belong to the subject and to be inseparable from it when said, the speaker has the fibre of the orator. Fire, compression and relevance are the elements of inevitableness

and inevitableness in speech is oratory. Mr Gladstone has it. It has been rightly said of him that 'he is the only man in Parliament who is an orator in the proper sense of the word—that is to say, to whom oratory is his element, natural to him as air is to a bird.'*

Eloquence is the talent of giving force to reason. Oratory compels action after argument has made duty clear. Health is a condition of most human efforts; but in oratory it is essential. In the cold air of a thin morning audience, mere energy and mellowness are inestimable; wisdom and learning would be harsh and unwelcome compared with a substantial man, who has radiant warmth of manner. What would Danton have been without his cannon voice? When Mirabeau spoke, his tone was like the tone of destiny, falling on the alarmed ear like broken thunder. He seemed as if moulded to be the orator of nature. It was his lion roar that gave him his splendid place in history. But without the ideas behind it, the voice would have been an affront. Yet the ideas without the voice would scarcely have made themselves legible on the great surface of obscurity which covers so many reputations, but upon which Mirabeau's name remains conspicuous. Bright's massive head, his clear sagacious glance, firm mouth, his organ tones, at once excited attention; while his slowly-spoken, deliberate words fell like the large drops of rain which precede a thunder-storm.

Bulk talking produces a greater effect than Bones talking. A large figure will have twice the advantage of a small figure when the intellectual power is equal in both. Of course health, nor stature, nor vocal power are to be had at will, but there are qualities of mind which cultivation will make capable of giving fame in speech, though not oratorical fame. In personal appearance, Hooker is described as a man of small stature and stooping gait. As a preacher his manner was grave. His eyes were always fixed on one

* William Hale White.

place, and he seemed to think out his discourse as he proceeded. His sermons were marked by brevity and simplicity, and were designed to convince and persuade rather than frighten men into goodness. He had a weak voice and an ineffective manner, but the weight and wisdom of his matter and the fascination of his composition did much to counteract these disadvantages. The arrangement of his sentences reveals a fine sense of proportion, and such mastery of expression that Ruskin might have taken him as a model. It has been finely said that 'the sweep and ease of his movements in the highest regions of thought, give him rank among the great philosophical thinkers and intellectual princes of all time.' The reader will see more to the same effect in Mr Ritson's article on Hooker.* It was from his rare faculty of discerning what was possible and what was probable that the author of *Ecclesiastical Polity* was named the 'Judicious Hooker,' whose reputation has endured three centuries.

An orator has everything for his purpose when he has stature, voice and sense. Bulk, however imposing, does not conquer unless mind goes with it. A great voice commands attention, but does not keep it unless there is quality in the thing said. To cite Mr Bright's sarcasm on one of these loud-voiced, idea-less orators, 'He speaks extremely well, if you do not listen to what he says.' Sheil has left a famous name, and yet he had a voice which squealed: it was his ideas and energy which saved him. Energy is the soul of oratory; and energy depends on health. Dr Samuel Johnson said, 'We can be useful no longer than we are well.' Of the rhetorician it may as safely be said that he is effective no longer than he is well. A variety of arts may be pursued in indifferent health; feebleness only prolongs execution; in rhetoric it mars the whole work. Even in the matter of efficient thinking, health is worth attention. The senses being the great inlets of knowledge,

* *Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review*, January 1894.

it is necessary that they be kept in health. It will be idle to conceal from ourselves that the physical is the father of the moral man. Morals depend greatly upon temperaments. The patience necessary for investigation cannot be preserved with impaired nerves. Long-continued wakefulness is capable of changing the temper and mental disposition of the most placid nature. The wise orator will as much attend to the exercise which gives him health as to the exercise which gives him skill.

It may not be necessary, because Carneades took copious doses of hellebore, as a preparative to refuting the dogmas of the Stoics, or because Dryden, when he had a grand design, took physic and parted with blood — that the searcher after truth should take a physician's opinion; yet it will be useful that some attention be paid to the physiology of the

> ———intellect, whose use
> Depends so much upon the gastric juice.

Since oratory pertains to large subjects, treated in a large manner, a stately manner of speaking about a small subject would be absurd, and bring oratory into disrepute. No one having a sense of the fitness of things would think of speaking in a small room to a small audience as he would in a large hall to a great assembly. Before a small audience the voice is lower and the manner more subdued. Besides, the speaker should distinguish subjects. Some need only information to be given about them; others need argument. Lucidity and relevance are sufficient for making informing statements. Animation and directness are sufficient for argument. Oratory and stately language, passion and decision of purpose, pertain alone to issues which have pathos and tragedy in them. There are more tragical subjects in the social life of the day than many suppose. Preventible loss of life at sea, in mines, neglect of sanitary precautions, poisonous trades, dwellings

which have death in them, as well as the issues of politics, have materials of oratory in them. Discrimination is needed in selecting the topics of oratory, and foresight in making it plain to the hearer that the issue before him has elements of danger to him in its neglect.

The subject treated in these chapters is the art of persuading the minds of men by oratory, argument or statement. Some may never excel in oratory, others do not excel when they might. Description is almost as difficult as an oration. Mr Bright acquired nearly as much fame by his descriptive as by his oratorical power. To this day people remember famous passages in which he described the effect of the Crimean War. Colonel Boyle was then member for Frome, and Colonel Blair member for a Conservative constituency. Mr Bright, with the slightest touches, and with not less eloquent gestures towards the empty seats, asked, Where was Colonel Boyle? and answered, 'He has found a grave in the stormy Euxine, his wife is a widow, his children orphans.' 'Who is there,' he continued, 'that does not recollect the frank; courageous and manly countenance of Colonel Blair? I doubt whether there were any men on either side of the House who were more capable of fixing the goodwill and affection of those with whom they were associated. Well, but the place that knew him shall know him no more for ever.'

Upon such instances the *Daily News* remarked — They are not famous passages from the speeches of Mr Bright, but they illustrate with great force a peculiar characteristic of his oratory, and one which has much to do with establishing its power. It is a very simple gift to describe, and it is nearly as rare as it is simple.'

One object of these pages is to promote the cultivation of the art of clear, relevant statement, without pretentiousness, yet at the same time with decision. The student, aware of the nature and conditions of oratory, can, when fitting occasion occurs, employ that higher art. One of his

biographers, I think it is the Rev. Mr Wright, says: 'One characteristic of the Duke of Wellington strikes the reader. Confident in his own capacity, he thinks, decides and acts while other men are hesitating and asking advice. He is evidently conscious that decision and promptitude, even though sometimes a man may err for want of due deliberation, will, in the long run, more often conduct to success than a slow judgment that comes too late.' Innumerable people will strike out a course, pursue it, while all goes well, but the temper of greatness places its life on the hazard of a well-chosen plan, counts upon failures and defeats, but relies on the 'long run' of persistency for success.

In this country, where we have the ballot, a free press, a free platform, and a free parliament, violence is what Talleyrand called 'a blunder which is worse than a crime'—his meaning being, I suppose, the statesman can guard against a criminal easier than against a fool. You know what the vicious will be at, but you never know what a fool will do. A people with the four great instruments of freedom above named, who cannot obtain public improvement without disorder, do not know their business. The great power in their hands is speech. To use a thought of Shakespeare, every speaker, by tongue or pen, in his own hand bears the means to cancel his captivity—if he be captive or wronged. The art of expression by argument or oratory is a great and invincible instrument. Orators in Parliament are estimated mainly by wealth and weight, or by relevant and new knowledge. Wealth, as a rule, has a large following—weight is measured by position, because position means influence, and influence means character of a determinate kind. Mr Justin M'Carthy, in one of his admirable lectures on the House of Commons, says: 'Once let a man make it clear that he rose because he had something to say, and not because he had to say something, the House would soon give him a hearing.' It was long said and believed that the workman in Parliament would be useless, and be dis-

regarded. This objection was urged mainly by those who did not wish to see him there. There always are people who, having what they want, think that sufficient for others. We have had in this country politicans who, like Bismarck, make a hole through which they can crawl to power, but stop it up as soon as they are through it; or, like Lassalle, who, having mounted, would kick down the ladder —it not being desirable that others should get up it; or, like Louis Napoleon, shoot those who got upon it. It was honestly thought by many in this country that workmen must prove ineffective in Parliament. But this misgiving has been dissipated. Mr Burt has an easy force in speaking, and an accuracy of expression, which classical training does not always impart, but which often comes to a man from good reading and an ear attentive to idiomatic terms in the speech of others. Book-learning has nearly obliterated in men's minds the sense of that knowledge without books, which experience gives to a man of natural powers, observant eyes and original understanding. This kind of knowledge is so rare that it always makes a strong impression in the House of Commons. Parliament consists of a company of gentlemen too brave to be intimidated; and contains so many members of great pride and great powers that it cannot be looked down upon; it simply disregards all who treat it with contempt or conceit. But that assembly has to deal with subjects so many and so important that no member can pretend to know everything, and, therefore, the House will listen with respectful and greedy ears to any member who can give it necessary information. And therefore when any member addresses it with relevance, with unpretendingness and modesty, yet with that clearness and directness, which is possible only when a man knows that he knows, the House of Commons respects him, listens to him, from the Premier to the last member below the gangway, and counts him as a real addition to the collective knowledge of the House.

It was predicted that working men in Parliament would be foolish or bumptious, timid or leadable. They proved to be neither the one nor the other, but independent without being impracticable, rightly regarding labour as one of the dignities of an honest state, and standing up for it with as much pride as they who represent rank or land. Before their day a young clerk rose to fame in England, America and India by oratory—a power which he owed to himself alone, and which was attained under circumstances entirely against him. George Thompson was an anti-slavery reformer, an Indian reformer, a free trader, a political reformer, and a foremost man in all. He had not only the courage of his opinions, he had that other courage which did not shrink before Boston mobs organised to lynch him in America—real mobs, who understood their business, and who had done that kind of thing before. Learning eloquence, or discovering that the gift of it was natural to him, from a Clerkenwell coffee-house debating society in Marylebone, he emerged from behind a desk, and became one of the first advocates in Europe in the days of Berryer, O'Connell and Brougham. They were the compeers with whom he was compared. I heard Lord Brougham say, on introducing him to an Exeter Hall audience, forty years ago, that 'George Thompson was the most persuasive speaker to whom he had ever listened.' I have heard him at the close of his speaking days address a meeting, in the National Hall, Holborn, at eleven o'clock at night, when half of the audience had gone home and only a wearied section was left, who were jaded, unexpectant, and longing for the vacation of the chair. Thompson arrested them, inspired them, set them aflame, caps and hats rose in the air, and for years after the tale of the wonderful speech of that night was told in workshops and committee meetings. Paralysis came upon him many years before his death. Oft when travelling I met him—his fine powers

of speech were arrested then. I consoled him by telling him that his splendid orations would live in men's memories; and I write these words in proof of it. He had his faults—as a few other persons I have known have; but he had the grand fervour of the orator. He spoke as Malibran sang—it was the natural expression of his nature. There was the accent of honesty and sincerity in his voice which neither O'Connell nor Brougham had in like degree. In that respect there was the difference between Thompson and them as there was in a greater degree between Gladstone and Beaconsfield. There was a generation of slaves who would have died for Thompson. What a splendid memory is that for a deathbed! He did not exercise influence in Parliament like that which he did on the platform, but that was because he did not give his mind to that distinct kind of work. Had he sought occasions, he could have won distinction there. He had the orator's power of marshalling facts; and had he relinquished what he thought the wider sphere of influence in America, in India, and the British platform, and laid in wait for parliamentary occasions, he had long been member for the Tower Hamlets, or elsewhere, at will. People have talked of Thompson as a great outdoor orator who failed in the House. He did not fail—he did not seek to succeed there. That is the explanation.

There was Serjeant Parry, whom I well knew. He rose from the ranks. As a Chartist orator he had fervour, readiness of speech, and a loud voice, but his style was loose, wordy and gaseous. We all thought that if he went to Parliament as he wished—and would have done had he lived—he would surely fail there. Seeking distinction at the bar, he studied the nature and conditions of oratory and became a new man, the delight of clients and the admiration of courts. I never knew such a transformation on the platform. His style became compact, vigorous and exact. His sentences, formerly gaseous, were solid as a cannon ball, and as he had ideas, a good presence, and a

strong voice, he would have soon won a high place in the House of Commons.

Labour members in Parliament have to be counted with by every Government. Besides Mr Burt, Mr Broadhurst, Mr Howell, Mr John Burns, Mr Pickard, Mr J. H. Wilson —others whom we have known on co-operative platforms, have abundantly vindicated the right of labour to personal representation.

A word ought to be said of the influence of pleasantry of mind in the orator. There are buffoons always in the House of Commons, and the other House also, like the late De Morny, the fellow-conspirator with Louis Napoleon, who on one occasion had to go into mourning. For this purpose he required a new hat; but regarding himself as a man of fashion, he told his hatter that he wanted it to be a mourning hat, but with 'a little gaiety in the brim.' There are wits in Parliament whose gaiety is in the brim, not in the brain. English humour is hearty and unaffected; Irish, brisk as mercury, setting propriety at defiance, but always bright with imagination. Scotch humour is sly, grave and caustic. But every nation is capable of delight when their great speakers or authors are capable of vindicating serious principle with relevant wit or humour.

When Sir Wilfrid Lawson entered Parliament, I was not aware that he belonged to a family in which humour was hereditary, and as it was known that he would represent the temperance cause, I ventured, needlessly, to suggest to him, that that cause would be much advanced by brightness and lightness of treatment. Those who had preceded him had manifested an oppressive heaviness: they made dead pop speeches, which infected the house with flatness. Their arguments were as tasteless as raw potatoes. The House soon found that, with Sir Wilfrid Lawson, humour was a natural endowment. He not only made temperance respectable, he made it entertaining, yet always keeping before the House the gravity of its issues. During the years when I

was much at the House of Commons, I studied the wits of Parliament, and observed that one thing was always true of Sir Wilfrid Lawson—he never jested with a principle, and he never gave us a jest instead of a principle. Sir Wilfrid was not a jester, and was more than a wit. His wit was earnestness for the right, made radiant by the light of humour. Some speakers tell us that truth lies at the bottom of a well, and they almost drown us in getting at it. Sir Wilfrid Lawson always took us over land to it, and through a path so bright and pleasant that we were glad in our hearts to make the journey.

Years ago there was a Mr Bernal, Chairman of Committees in the House of Commons, who said that 'law was morality shaped by Act of Parliament.' What nobler occupation than that of speakers and orators whose business it is to convert morality into law?

He who gives directions for the attainment of oratory is supposed, if a public speaker, to be capable of illustrating his own precepts. He may be thought to challenge criticism, and his own performances may be condemned by a reference to his own precepts; or, on the other hand, his precepts may be undervalued through his own failures in their application. Should this take place in the present instance, I have only to urge, with Horace, in his *Art of Poetry*, that a whetstone, though itself incapable of cutting, is yet useful in sharpening steel. No system of instruction will completely equalise natural powers, and yet it may be of service towards their improvement. The youthful Achilles acquired skill in hurling the javelin under the instruction of Chiron, though the master could not compete with the pupil in vigour of arm.

But there is little danger in these days of serious judgment being passed upon the indifferent exemplar of the rhetorical maxims he lays down. Our orators escape as our statues do. Good public monuments are so scarce that the people are ill judges of art, and great speakers too

seldom arise for the people to be good judges of oratory. England has not reached the age of excellence in this respect. Great events can excite it, but only a national refinement, including opulence, and a liberal philosophy, can sustain it. Oratory ordinarily requires the union of intellect, leisure and health, discipline of thought, calculated expression and public spirit.

The speeches of great leaders are to hearers like walking along a pier, out far into the sea. Away from the air made dull and murky by mediocrity, the fresh breezes of reason like those of the ocean, blow around the great questions of the day; everyone sees clearly the issue, and is braced to aid it.

Americans are a quick people, ready to project themselves into the second thing before they have done with the first; yet they will sit quietly under speeches, the length of which would shorten the lives of Englishmen. The French, who are yet brighter and more alert-minded, will at times keep their seats in patience under papers read of seemingly endless length—and continue to live. Lord Bacon says that 'short speeches are like darts which fly about and are thought to proceed from some secret intention, whereas long discourses are flat and not to be noted.' French orators seem to place their trust in long orations. It is wonderful how so mercurial a people can sit during a protracted address, when no national interest makes men curious, and no enterprise of thought inspires patience.

At the first Co-operative Congress in France I had opportunity of observing characteristics of Parisian speaking. The action of the French orators was superb. When they sought the chairman's attention their arms were darted forward and upward, suddenly, as far as arms could go. It was as though they would reach the chairman with them. Then one would leave his seat, and walk quietly and slowly down the meeting, soliloquising like Hamlet as he walked

That was part of his speech. Then facing the audience, the quiet stroller to the platform delivered entire volleys of sentences as though they were ejected from a culverin. All at once the explosion stopped, and the speaker walked slowly back and sat down in his seat, just as though he had never left it. Another orator had risen to answer him, when you saw that he who had walked to his seat so placidly had thrown back his ears like a hare, and had caught every word said behind him; and when you heard another decided volley of words, you found that it was your placid-walking speaker, who had found his way back to the platform, and was answering the delegate who had differed from him. When a speaker was concluding, his gestures were often the wonder of the night to me. Every motion of emphasis, earnestness, decision, prediction, malediction, or benediction, with which some ended, were all expressed by miraculous and rapid motions of the arms above, below, around, in broad wave or graceful whirling curve, until arms and body seemed to disappear in the air, and the head of the orator alone remained recognisable. In debates, a man in the gallery, or back of the meeting, would stroll down, or pass along the gangway, as though he was leaving the hall, but does not. He continues walking aimlessly, and when you think he has gone out, he turns up near the president. He watches anyone who is speaking, as an Indian looks out from the bush when he descries an enemy coming over the border of the plain. The moment the speech ceases, the man near the president projects himself into prominence and pours out a volley of words as incessant and prolonged as the firing of artillery. When it occurs to the new orator to return to his seat, he begins threading his way to the back of the meeting or gallery, whence he came, sometimes talking all along the pathway. No Englishman's arm can make the easy, graceful, pliable curves a Frenchman knows how to produce. In every way in which the arm can cleave the air or caress it—in

whatever manner finger can point, or open palm, or displayed hand can indicate emotion, emphasis, sentiment or argument — the French orator is master of that expression.

All this shows how much oratory depends upon temperament for gesture and delivery. But the elements of oratory, force of argument, vividness of speech, concentration and boldness of idea, remain the same in all countries and all time, though the splendour of delivery varies with national vivacity and grace.

He who has listened to Italian oratory in Bologna knows it is not the grand passion of impulse, which the French display in Paris or Tours—but the superb passion of the intellect. An Italian is speaking—you cannot say 'he rises' in his place. He is so quick, you hear him but do not see him rise. His movements are too rapid for that. Anon a low, enchanting voice is heard; soon it becomes eager, resonant, filling the hall with mellow, resilient tones, and all the grace of sculpture in the speaker's gestures. Another appears with a bushy head of dark hair, handsome, well-cut features, and piqued beard; in person slender, tall and picturesque, with a penetrating voice and miraculous action. His hair and beard vibrate; his arms make every motion known in conic sections; his whole frame is circular and revolving. With outstretched arm and forefinger projected —now pointing laterally, now perpendicularly, then to the earth—anon the open palm is extended, entreating, darting, cleaving vacant space as though his purpose was to cut it into pieces, the voice orotund, beseeching, denouncing, declaiming. No carding machine, no spinning-jenny, no steam engine at high pressure, nor the most intricate action invented, was ever capable of so many motions, and such continuous energy. Next a bold, sonorous voice (like Gambetta's) would thunder through the hall, when people leaving returned, and others entering rush forward to see who has taken the floor, and learn what the surging intensity of

tones, the polished energy, the controlled vehemence, and enchanted tumult of applause all means. It was Signor Luzzatti who was speaking. Italian oratory is a musical tempest.

There is oratory in England equal to that of any nation, but more attention is given to its cultivation elsewhere than here. Good delivery is more common than with us, and there is more freedom in gesture and tone. Being alien to English taste to betray much emotion, we think it unreal in those to whom it is natural. French speaking seemed to me to have more personal fervour; Italian speaking more intellectual fervour. The French appear to speak with the force of feeling; the Italian from the force of conviction, who, in his most dramatic moods, maintains a certain dignity of self-possession. An Englishman speaks as though his words had wings and flew about in the air, and at times escape him when he most wants to catch them. An Italian seems to carry his store of words within him, and delivers them at will, in full, melodious tones. Spontaneity, however, is the main charm of spoken words. The orator will have concentrated passages in his mind, but does not think too much of them—he may have seen all through his sentences when he first arranged them in his mind, but if the conclusion has passed for the moment from his mind—as was the case with Charles James Fox—he invents a new termination and extricates himself as best he can. It has been well said 'a certain free handling and disdain of literal exactitude is only one grace the more in speaking, just as it is in sketching. It is the human note. The most effective speakers are often those who have the courage of their verbal inaccuracies, and who leave on the minds of their hearers the sense of over-mastering possession by the subject itself, that seems to preclude all other concern.' This is sometimes the case; but the student should not trust to it. An orator trained to accuracy of expression finds that it never deserts him, and in the very blaze of passion such self-possession comes to

him that he plays with every detail of speech, and says things with grace, qualification and illustration that never occurred to him before, and which he cannot often recall after. At the same time the 'free handling' commended in this passage is good, and gives the impression of mastery.

Mr William Hale White, who, like his father, wrote the best Parliamentary criticisms of his time, remarked, in a memorable passage :—

'Old men, who know that they have at the best but a little breathing space before they are no more and are forgotten, may be excused if their zeal for affairs diminishes. They may ask themselves, "What does it matter to me?" But in Mr Gladstone it is wonderful to see, and admirable to see, that men and ideas are of more importance now than they were when life was before him. His enthusiasm on Tuesday reached that pitch of abandonment which is usually supposed to be characteristic of youth, but yet the centrifugal power was never so strong as to propel him into inanity. Like the perfect orator he is, he was always master of himself, and came again in complete curve. It was curious to see how his passion improved his style as he went along. I have often observed of him, but never so signally as on this occasion, that he falls into the most idiomatic English when he gets thoroughly warm, and that the warmer he grows the simpler he becomes, so that all verbiage and sesquipedalism disappear, and he is as compressed and simple as Lord Bacon. For example: "Gentlemen will recollect how we were fired with false rumours and mutilated telegrams. First of all, Russia had been making some secret agreement. Nothing so much excited the country as the statement that there were secret agreements between Russia and Turkey. *It would have been so wicked of Russia, would it not?*"'

His hearers knew that the pigeon holes in our Foreign Office were stuffed with secret treaties we had made.

Let those who think an oration can be made at will, without premeditation or practice, read the following passage from one of the famous sermons of Massillon. He had explained how men justify their conduct to their consciences because they live as the multitude live, and are no worse than others of their class and station. Massillon then exclaims :—

'On this account it is, my brethren, that I confine myself to you who at present are assembled here; I include not the rest of men, but consider you as alone existing on the earth. The idea which occupies and frightens me is this: I figure to myself the present as your last hour and the end of the world; that the heavens are going to open above your heads; our Saviour, in all His glory, to appear in the midst of the temple; and that you are only assembled here to wait His coming; like trembling criminals on whom the sentence is to be pronounced, either of life eternal or of everlasting death; for it is vain to flatter yourselves that you shall die more innocent than you are at this hour. All those desires of change with which you are amused will continue to amuse you till death arrives, the experience of all ages proves it; the only difference you have to expect will most likely be only a larger balance against you than what you would have to answer for at present; and from what would be your destiny were you to be judged this moment, you may almost decide upon what will take place at your departure from life. Now, I ask you (and connecting my own lot with yours I ask with dread), were Jesus Christ to appear in this temple, in the midst of this assembly, to judge us, to make the dreadful separation betwixt the goats and sheep, do you believe that the greatest number of us would be placed at His right hand? Do you believe that the number would at least be equal? Do you believe there would even be found ten upright and faithful servants of the Lord, when formerly five cities could not furnish so

many? I ask you. You know not, and I know it not. Thou alone, O my God, knowest who belong to Thee. But if we know not who belong to Him, at least we know that sinners do not. Now, who are the just and faithful assembled here at present? Titles and dignities avail nothing, you are stripped of all these in the presence of your Saviour. Who are they? Many sinners who wish not to be converted; many more who wish, but always put it off; many others who are only converted in appearance, and again fall back to their former courses. In a word, a great number who flatter themselves they have no occasion for conversion. This is the party of the reprobate. Ah! my brethren, cut off from this assembly these four classes of sinners, for they will be cut off at the great day. And now appear, ye just! Where are ye? O God, where are Thy chosen? And what a portion remains to Thy share.'

The resounding and commanding voice of the preacher —his penetrating and unevadable questions—his short clear sentences, which none could misunderstand, prevented the attention of any hearer from being diverted—his tones and gestures of alarm (for the fearful picture he drew had entered his own soul) overwhelmed his hearers with dismay and terror. All would resolve on amendment, and happily many would persevere in it.

There is an old Continental proverb which says: 'An Italian is wise before he undertakes a thing, the German while he is doing it, and a Frenchman when it is over.' In oratory, and in other things, I could wish my countrymen to be both Italians and German—wise both in conception and act.

CHAPTER XXIV

ORIGINALITY IN ORATORY

ORIGINALITY is founded in nature—an inexhaustible field in which to find it. Genius is a glimpse of nature denied to others. Realism is truth and newness. There would be more originality than there is if, instead of following custom without thought, men went to nature, the source of all surprises. Edmund Kean, who had originality in him, augmented it by art. One day he saw Jack Painter, the prize-fighter, raise his arm to strike when he could no longer rise from the ground. When next Kean played Richard III. he did that, and 'brought down the house.' When asked how he came to think of expressing in that way undying valour, he said Jack Painter gave him the idea by what he did when beaten. Men wondered how Massillon, living in a cloister, could know the human heart as he did. When asked how he came by such knowledge, which exceeded that of other men, he answered: 'I learned it by studying myself.' 'Locke tells us, says Lord Byron, that 'all his knowledge of the human understanding was derived from studying his own mind.' Emerson, who excelled in the quality, advised him who would be original, thus:—'Insist on yourself—never imitate. Your gift you can present every moment, with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession. The way to

speak and write what shall not go out of fashion, is to speak and write sincerely. Take Sidney's maxim: "Look in thy heart and write." He that writes to himself writes to an eternal public.'

Originality is reality, instead of stereotype conventionalism. A dialogue between Bacon and Shakespeare ran as follows:—

Bacon: He that can make the multitude laugh and weep as you do, Mr Shakespeare, need not fear scholars. A head naturally fertile and forgetive is worth many libraries, inasmuch as a tree is more valuable than a basket of fruit, or a good hawk better than a bag full of game, or the little purse which a fairy gave to Fortunatus more inexhaustible than all the coffers in the treasury. More scholarship might have sharpened your judgment, but the particulars whereof a character is composed are better assembled by force of imagination than of judgment. Although judgment perceives coherences, it cannot summon up materials, nor melt them into a compound with the felicity which belongs to imagination alone.

Shakespeare: My Lord, thus far I know, that the first glimpse and conception of a character in my mind is always engendered by chance and accident. We shall suppose, for instance, that I am sitting in a taproom, or standing in a tennis court. The behaviour of someone fixes my attention. I note his dress, the sound of his voice, the turn of his countenance, the drinks he calls for, his questions and retorts, the fashion of his person, and, in brief, the whole outgoings and incomings of the man. These grounds of speculation being cherished and revolved in my fancy, it becomes straightway possessed with a swarm of conclusions and beliefs concerning the individual. In walking home I picture out to myself what would be fitting for him to say or do upon any given occasion, and these fantasies, being recalled at some after period, when I am writing a play, shape themselves into divers manikins, who are not long

of being nursed into life. Thus comes forth Shallow and Slender and Mercutio and Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

An early commentator of Shakespeare's plays says it was watching a meat dealer sharpening skewers that gave the great dramatist the fine conception: 'There is a Providence doth shape our ends, rough hew them as we will.' Thus may imagination find in the meanest things emblems of the loftiest.

In observation and experiment original information has its source. But the conventionalisms of society repress its manifestation. Lord Jeffrey has depicted its influence on young men in a passage of great instruction. 'In a refined and literary community,' says he, 'so many critics are to be satisfied, so many rivals to be encountered, and so much division to be hazarded, that a young man is apt to be deterred from so perilous an enterprise, and led to seek distinction in some safer line of exertion. His originality is repressed till he sinks into a paltry copyist, or aims at distinction by extravagance and affectation. In such a state of society he feels that mediocrity has no chance of distinction; and what beginner can expect to rise at once into excellence? He imagines that mere good sense will attract no attention, and that the manner is of much more importance than the matter in a candidate for public admiration. In his attention to the manner, the matter is apt to be neglected; and in his solicitude to please those who require elegance of diction, brilliancy of wit, or harmony of periods, he is in some danger of forgetting that strength of reason and accuracy of observation by which he first proposed to recommend himself. His attention, when extended to so many collateral objects, is no longer vigorous or collected; the stream, divided into so many channels, ceases to flow either deep or strong; he becomes an unsuccessful pretender to fine writing, and is satisfied with the frivolous praise of elegance or vivacity.'

Young preachers, poetical from ardour, and enthusiastic

from passion, will often rush from libraries crammed with lore, with which nobody else is familiar, and pour out before a congregation what the speaker believes to be both sublime and impressive, but which his hearers cannot understand. They grow listless and restless, and he retires overwhelmed with a sense of failure.

On one occasion a young preacher of considerable promise, for whom I had a great friendship, failed in this way. I sought to console him by urging that failure with one of his quality should be but a stepping-stone to success. Persons of eminence have mostly failed many times before they succeeded. 'But why have I not succeeded?' he asked. 'I can never hope to say better things of my own than I have said to-night of others.' 'The cause of your non-success is explicable. A young preacher who had ascended the pulpit with great confidence, but who broke down in the middle of his sermon, was met by Rowland Hill as he was rushing from the pulpit. "Young man," said Rowland, "had you ascended the pulpit in the spirit in which you descended, you would have descended in the spirit in which you ascended." Something of this kind will explain your case. At first, then, you should address your hearers as though they were children, state your arguments as though they were learners, and then assume them to be well-informed men. On the threshold of a new subject most men are as children—during its unfoldment they are learners; only when the subject is mastered are they men with manhood's understanding.' To forget this is to be open to the sarcasm of Swift, who, when Burnet said, speaking of the Scotch preachers in the time of the civil war, 'The crowds were far beyond the capacity of their churches, or the reach of their voices,' Swift added, 'And the preaching beyond the capacity of the crowd. I believe the church had as much capacity as the minister.'

Mr Justin M'Carthy, in his *History of Our Own Times*, says that 'Cardinal Newman, like Mill, has the rare art

which dissolves all the difficulties of the most abstruse or perplexed subject, and shows it bare and clear even to the least subtle of readers. His words dispel mists. There are many passages of his works in which he rises to the height of a genuine and noble eloquence. In all the arts that make a great preacher or orator, Newman was strikingly deficient. His manner was constrained, ungraceful and even awkward, his voice was thin and weak. His bearing was not at first impressive in any way. A gaunt, emaciated figure, a sharp and eagle face, a cold, meditative eye, rather repelled than attracted those who saw him for the first time. Singularly devoid of affectation, Newman did not always conceal his intellectual scorn of men who made loud pretence with inferior gifts, and the men must have been few indeed whose gifts were not inferior to his. Newman had no scorn for intellectual inferiority in itself; he despised it only when it gave itself airs. Mr Gladstone said of him:—

'Dr Newman's manner in the pulpit was one which, if you considered it in its separate parts, would lead you to arrive at very unsatisfactory conclusions. There was not very much change in the inflection of his voice; action there was none; his sermons were read, and his eyes were always on his book; and all that, you will say, is against efficiency in preaching. Yes; but you take the man as a whole, and there was a stamp and a seal upon him, there was a solemn music and sweetness in his tone, there was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and with the manner, which made even his delivery such as I have described it, and though exclusively with written sermons, singularly attractive.'

The Cardinal's originality lay in his ideas. Like Massillon he had a surprising knowledge of the human heart. Like his famous brother, Professor Francis William Newman, he had a musical voice, which, though not powerful, was expressive. A university is mainly a school of learn-

ing. It matters little to students how a professor speaks, it is what he says to which the greedy ear of the learner is lent. It is not the manner but the matter which is important to them. It is knowledge, not voice or gesture, which wins the degree. John Henry Newman had been lost or unregarded had he not had the good fortune to have for hearers men to whom ideas were everything. Originality there gave him his great fame

Dr Channing had newness and boldness of thought where other preachers were conventional. He was a lean man, quite fragile. Americans, who always give the weight of their public men, and partly estimate them by their avoirdupois qualities, found that Dr Channing weighed only 100 lbs! But he was aided by a marvellous voice. Men wondered how such tones as his could proceed from so slender a throat. He cultivated this power, which grew by practice. When he read the line of the hymn,—

Angels roll that stone away,

Dr Robert Collyer told me the congregation thought they heard the movement of the stone in the air.

Of the *Lowell Offering*, published by Charles Knight in his day, the *Times* said:—'It is the production of factory girls in Lowell—the American Manchester—and we much doubt if all the duchesses in England could write as much and so seldom offend against good taste. The secret of these girls' success in writing arises from their writing only about what they know—common life and their own affairs!'

A cause of failure with young lecturers is neglecting to establish a common understanding between themselves and their auditors, and not comprehending the use of a brief explanatory exordium. We know that the geometer would in vain reason with others unless axioms were previously agreed upon for reference.

So with an audience. If they do not agree with the speaker as to the premises from which he reasons, they have no standard by which they can test his conclusions. Hence, though he may confound them, he will never convince them.

It is in this sense only that those who would improve the public must 'write down' to the public. They may, and they ought to, elevate the public by their sentiments, but they must found their reasoning on what the populace understand and admit, or they reason in vain. The people must be taken at what they are, and elevated to what they should be.

Thus the student may see that originality may be shown in various ways. Lucidity in itself is one source of it. Be plain, but not coarse. What is called plain speaking is generally insolent speaking. Keep clear of charnel-house terms, which appal the hearer, and turn him away. Be clear in a salubrious sense. Hint as little as possible. An innuendo is like scouring the doorstep with butter—it makes it slippery, not clean. Spare a general audience oyster ideas that lie in the deep beds of a subject, and require a professional knife to open them.

It is always pleasant to speak to a Scotch audience. They always understand you. If you have a point they see it, and if you have not a point they see that. They will forgive you being dull if you mean something. Depend on ideas, and be sure you have them. Ideas are the soul of speech.

A man sees best with his eyes well open. There are somnambulist auditors who seem to walk into an assembly asleep. The first thing which produces wakefulness on their part is the discovery that something pertinent is being said, in which they are concerned. A man who has expectations from his aunt looks at the old lady in a much more wakeful way than he would had she nothing to give. If the speaker is unknown, the mind of the audience is a mere

cold, hard surface, upon which an impression can scarcely be made. Then there is no help for the speaker but a fiery statement, some flashing tone, some light of illustration which has warmth in it—which melts indifference into interest. Then attention becomes as wax, upon which the deepest or most delicate impression can be made—and time, instead of effacing it, hardens it into durability. It was said by Panchard that Mirabeau was 'the first man in the world to speak upon a question he knew nothing about.' That was because he had much general knowledge and knew more than he was known to know. Besides, he had confidence, self-possession and quickness of mind, which enabled him to see what might, or ought to be said on a new subject as soon as he heard it proposed. It might have been in reference to Mirabeau that Lord Brougham said 'Know everything about something and something about everything,' for Mirabeau's knowledge was far wider and out of the way than Panchard knew. In nine years' experience in the office of a public tutor in one of the Universities, Paley found, in discoursing to young persons upon topics of morality, that unless the subject was so drawn up to a point as to exhibit the full force of an objection, or the exact place of a doubt, before any explanation was entered upon, it was labour lost. In other words, unless some curiosity was excited before it was attempted to be satisfied, the labour of the teacher was wasted. When information was not desired it was seldom, he found, retained. Create in the mind of the audience a sense of want of the knowledge you have to give, and they will attend to it because they desire it. Paley had much original common sense acquired by observation.

Absolute repugnance to a pursuit is no proof of incapacity for excelling in it; the career of hundreds show they had the greatest aversion to the profession circumstances compelled them to follow. When a boy at a Dame's school, she boxed my ears for three days because I would not try

to make curved lines, of which I believed myself entirely incapable. All the while I had form in my blood, could make any letter, and had latent facility and delight in inventing new forms, and I knew it not.

We know not what we can do till we have made the experiment, and in mistrusting our powers we increase the difficulty we have to surmount. Charles Reece Pemberton whose delineations of Shakespeare's tragic heroes was second only to Macready's, avowed that when he first saw a play performed he felt conscious that he should never be equal to the duties even of a scene-shifter. Julius Cæsar, naturally of a weak and tender constitution, was determined, by exercise, inuring himself to exposure and other such means, to improve it; even he, afterwards so renowned, shed tears on reflecting that at his own age Alexander had done so much, whilst he himself had done nothing. Originality is perceived in its sagacity in attempting an untried course, and its singleness of purpose in pursuing it; for general excellence is an impossibility, and it is folly and dissipation of time to attempt it. Wellington possessed scarcely any quality which the world recognises as genius, save in purpose which he followed out. De Witt said, 'Do one thing at a time.' We must not only have a purpose, but keep to that purpose only, if we wish to succeed, for it is of no use having a purpose, with aptitude and opportunity for carrying it out, if we are deficient in the power of continuity. Excellence comes by continuity. The strength of mind is measured by the amount of perseverance used. Genius itself is a thing of degree; its elements are common to all, and if all do all they can, though not eminent, each will rise higher in the scale of power. Demosthenes, Cicero, Cæsar, Napoleon, all worked hard. It is this working hard which has made the man of mediocrity pass by those to whom nature has been prodigal of other gifts.

It is told of Frederic the Great, that being informed of

the death of one of his chaplains, a man of considerable learning and piety, he desired that his successor should not be behind him in these qualifications, and apprised a candidate about to preach a trial sermon at the royal chapel, that he would himself furnish him with a text from which he was to make an extempore sermon. The king arrived at the end of the prayers, and on the candidate ascending the pulpit, one of his majesty's aides-de-camp presented him with a sealed paper. The preacher opened it and found nothing written therein. He did not, however, lose his presence of mind, but turning the paper on both sides, he said, 'My brethren, here is nothing and there is nothing; out of nothing God created all things,' and he proceeded to deliver an admirable discourse upon the wonders of the creation.

'Hic Rhodus; hic salta' (Here is Rhodes—leap here). Do not wait for a change of outward circumstances, but take your circumstances as they are, and make the best of them. This saying, which was meant to shame a braggart, will admit of a very different application. Goethe has changed the postulate of Archimedes, 'Give me a fulcrum and I will move the world,' into the precept, 'Make good thy standing-place if thou wouldst move the world.' This is what he did throughout his life.

There are few problems of events which do not also bring their solutions with them, were we cool enough to read them; but men do not believe what they see, or will not see what is before them. We make pre-conceived opinion, pre-determined judgment, overrule new facts. We too often act the part of the man who is so much in love with his boat that he never ventures to sail in it. An orator should go to the rostrum mainly to announce conclusions, not to form them. Let him take advantage of the tide of feeling, temper and exclamations of the meeting; but unless he is firm in a previous purpose, these things will take advantage of him, and carry him away from his

subject, instead of his carrying away the audience. The main word or phrase should strike like a blow, or pierce through the flesh—and no words should precede or accompany the term intended to pierce, save those which like feathers give wings to the arrow. All superfluous words are as friction in the air, and impede the shaft, or act as buffers mitigating its force, or protecting him against whom it is levelled. Every aimless phrase or word which points elsewhere than the target, diverts attention, so that no one sees when it is hit. Skill in rhetorical, that is intellectual marksmanship (if there be such a word), will win for a man the repute of originality without his knowing how he came by it—the quality not being common.

One day, when Frederick Douglass first appeared on the platform, he was speaking against the northern 'doughfaces,' and quoted against them the text, 'And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.' Immediately arose the familiar hiss, and, drawing himself up to his full height, Douglass, pointing to the sibilant creatures, exclaimed, 'I told you so. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, dust shalt thou eat, and *hiss*, all the days of thy life.' This was not in the text, but it told all the same upon the serpents in the meeting.

There was a famous negress in America known as 'Sojourner Truth'—a name she gave herself, as she went from place to place preaching, even when she was 100 years of age. Hearing, during slavery days, Douglass lecture in despairing tone upon the termination of slavery, Sojourner raised her tall form, rendered more striking by her flowing grey hair, and exclaimed, with her deep, loud voice, 'Frederick, is God dead?' Her short oration evoked the hopes and enthusiasm of the assembly, who were astonished at the splendid question. She had pro-

bably nursed the orator, who was born in slavery, and called him Frederick, as in earlier days. In a striking speech in the House of Commons, Mr Stansfeld said: 'The whole principle of the Home Rule Bill was to find a *modus vivendi* between the two nations. The geographical position of Ireland determined its political relations. There must be a union—but not too rigid and absolute a union, as though the British and the Irish were *monotonously one.*' Thus a phrase which has light in it makes the fortune of a speech.

Originality is like fortune—a man may inherit it at birth, or it may come to him after, with this difference: no one need wait for originality being given; he may find it by looking for it. When Turner wished to paint a storm he had himself lashed to the mast of a ship and went out into the tempest to see what it was like. When Massillon said he had studied his own heart, he knew that strange knowledge was to be found there. Fielding quotes the instructive saying, 'Man differs from man more than man differs from the beast.' Thus sources of originality lie thick wherever a man moves, if he gives his mind to observe them.

One thing has to be borne in mind. When Shakespeare says 'To thine own self be true,' a man who acts on the injunction should ask himself what his own self really is. Is it a base self, or a noble self? his ignorant self, or his cultivated self? Let not the appeal be to a base but to a best self.

Proportion of time, as well as proportion of parts, is essential, both for the sake of the speaker's strength as well as the hearer's patience. Whitfield is reported to have said that a man with the eloquence of an angel ought not to exceed forty minutes in the length of a sermon, and it is well known that Wesley seldom exceeded thirty. 'I have almost always found,' says another eminent preacher, 'that the last fifteen minutes of a sermon an hour in length was

worse than lost, both upon the speaker and congregation!' There is practical wisdom in these remarks. A man who determines to speak but a short time is more likely to command the highest energy for his effort, and to speak with sustained power. Half an hour is time enough for immortality. Mirabeau achieved it by efforts of less duration. It is not without reason that we keep the proverb, 'Brevity is the soul of wit.' There is originality in that brevity which fully informs, but never tires. The orator may wisely remember the lines of Mr E. E. Bowen, sung at Speech Day at Harrow, when John Lyon approaches Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury Fort, to plead for the School Charter—

'Marry come up,' says good Queen Bess,
'Draw it shorter, and prose it less;
For speeches are things we mostly bless,
When once we've got them over.'

CHAPTER XXV

THE OUTSIDE MIND OF THE ORATOR

MANY people have no outside mind (nor inside mind either), which deprives them of the greatest gift of the gods —that of 'seeing themselves as others see them.' Few attain to that power; but what is more important, rhetorically, is that the orator sees his subject as it may strike others, and provides that it shall strike them rightly. Dr Burchard (before mentioned), never thought how his fatal alliteration of 'Rum, Romanism and Rebellion' would strike his Presidential audience. Sir William Follet, the nature of whose forensic strength has been described, had no thought as to the outside impression he might make against the justice and impartiality of the law he was bound, as Attorney-General, to uphold and exalt. At the trial of Thomas Cooper he was so vindictive to the Chartist shoemaker at the bar that, despite Cooper's reconversion to Christianity, and the Divine forgiveness which he preached, he never forgave Sir William Follet, who filled the hearts of thousands of Chartists with hatred of Whig Government. All the while, fair speech would have vindicated the law and increased respect for the party he represented. Half the disaffection of the people in every nation is created by well-meaning vindicators of order who have no outside mind, and who betray the interests committed to them.

Very often a man betrays himself by not considering how

others may regard him, in consequence of what he says. Professor H. Morley, in his introduction to 'Julius Cæsar,'* shows that the continuation of the tragedy to the death of Brutus was necessary to the design Shakespeare had. Here he might have said reasonably and effectively, 'The reader who is of this opinion will think that the critics who have said that the play ought to have concluded with the assassination scene did not understand the theory on which the great tragedy was evidently written.' Instead of words to this effect, Professor Morley exclaims :—

'Shall we ask now where the wit lay under the wigs of critics who wondered why Shakespeare did not end the play of "Julius Cæsar" with the scene of the assassination?'

This is to say, now Professor Morley has spoken, there can be no doubt under *whose* wig the wit lies. This was quite apparent from his clear and instructive argument, without *his* saying so and repelling the reader by his conceit.

A man may be the first to conceive an idea of mark, or to discover a new method of public service—an idea which nobody thinks much of at the time—a method which nobody acts upon. Years after, somebody comes forward with the same thought, or the same device, who obtains both credit and attention. He may have originated the idea independently, and at a time when the public were better inclined than before to entertain the conception, or he may have derived it from the first promulgator, to whom no reference is made. If, however, he who was first in the field comes forward with clamorous or imputative claims for credit, he rarely gets it, however much it may be his due. But if he contents himself with expressing his pleasure at seeing views now accepted, coincident with those which long ago, at a certain time, and in a certain way, were advanced by himself, but were then unnoticed or unregarded—the modesty of his reference will beget public interest in the question. Many would be

* Cassell's 'National Library.'

disposed to admit his originality who would refuse assent to it if it were put forward in a spirit of jealous and egotistical pretension. It is important to an advocate and an orator not to forget that every public question has an outside.

When I was a young man I was one of several lecturers engaged in debating and explaining the principles of the Communistic movement then advocated. It was our duty to report from time to time to the *New Moral World*, the journal of the movement (of which we were accredited missionaries), the proceedings in which we took part. The most eminent of my colleagues, Mr Lloyd Jones, seldom did this. When asked why few reports came from him, he answered, 'How could he praise himself?' Of course he could not usefully do so. Nobody wanted him to do it. But what he might have done was to describe the quality and number of the audiences whom he addressed, what adversaries appeared, the point of what they said, and briefly, the purport of his replies. This would be instructive to his colleagues elsewhere, and to the readers of the journal in question. He was not required to tell them how clever he was—how successfully he silenced his opponents—or how brilliantly he acquitted himself. All this would better appear in his arguments than in any eulogy he could write of himself. Could he have looked outside himself in that respect, as he did in many other things, he had been further useful and entertaining.

It was through the influence of Madame Maintenon that Massillon was appointed to preach before Louis XIV. during Advent, 1699. Louis XIV. was then at the height of his power and glory; the military reverses which embittered his later years had not begun; he was 'The Grand Monarch' of Europe, intoxicated with flattery. It was customary for the court preachers to begin with a compliment to him. The courtiers were keenly expectant, as they watched the preacher's calm, rapt face, as to how he would turn his

opening sentences. 'Blessed are they that mourn,' was the unexpected text. And again he paused. 'Sire,' he said, 'if the world were here speaking to your Majesty, and not Jesus Christ, it would not address you thus. It would say to you, "Blessed is the prince who has never fought but he has conquered; who has imposed peace on the nations at his will; who has filled the universe with his name; who through a long and flourishing reign has enjoyed at his ease the fruits of his glory, the love of his people, the admiration of his enemies, the wisdom of his laws, the noble hope of a numerous posterity." But, sire, Jesus Christ speaks not as the world speaks. "Happy," He saith to you, "not he who wins the admiration of the present world, but who is chiefly occupied with the world to come; who lives in forgetfulness of all that passeth away because his conversation is in Heaven. Happy not he whose reign will be immortalised in history, but he whose penitential tears shall have blotted out the history of his sins from the memory of God." Yea, it is he who is happy. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."'

A monk, who before this had been commanded to preach before the king, began his sermon thus: 'Sire, I mean not to pay any compliment to your Majesty—I have found none in the Gospel.' This monk was more intent on displaying his own cloistered asceticism than on displaying the truth, and he never more had opportunity of touching the conscience of the king. By obtruding 'faithfulness' out of season he lost his chance of being useful in season. Massillon was wiser. He knew that truth does better to knock at doors than break them open. You may indeed thrust truth through the splintered panels, but the occupant of the house will kick it out again as soon as you are gone. Violence begets contempt, except among cowards.

Once I had a house in which I designed to reside to the

end of my days, and in order that those days should not be unnecessarily shortened, I spent £150 in making it entirely healthy. To be sure of this, I called in a sanitary engineer. Only one thing was wanting in the end—a man-hole of eleven feet in depth to the main drain for access to a trap to be placed there. This I wished made outside the house, and application was sent to the town authorities for leave to do it. The answer was that they had refused 11,000 applications, involving an operation on the footpath where the shaft in question would be made. The builder who was making my alterations—himself an alderman—said 'nothing could be done; the shaft must be in the house,' and he took up the floor of my front room, and dug nine feet down, before I was aware of it. I desired him to fill up the hole and replace the floor. I consulted the mayor —who happened to call upon me—who said he was afraid the permission I wanted could not be had. Seeing there was an outside to this question, I wrote to the works committee the following letter, with a view to show them how their refusal would appear to the public if made known to them :—

'GENTLEMEN,—Word has come to me that you decline to permit me to put a shaft outside my house. The town recently spent £1000 in vindicating its salubriousness as a place where visitors may come, or gentlemen reside, without having to make a preliminary engagement with their undertakers. Believing this, I became a resident, when I am informed that, if I desire to sink a shaft upon my premises for sanitary purposes, it must be within my house. Do you mean that I must ask my friends whether they will dine in the "Front sewer-room" or in the "Back sewer-room?" It would cost me less to have three burials from my house than the alterations for salubrity I am making. But as I may be one of the three to be buried, I object to this risk. True, I may let the house to a tenant, but if I know that

the germs of death can percolate into it, I should feel, if a death ensued, that I was a murderer. Landlord law would permit me to do so, but I should not be less a scoundrel if, for the sake of rent, I did it. What say you, gentlemen?'

The Town Surveyor, a clear-headed officer, sent me the permission I sought. Afterwards, the mayor asked me for a copy of my letter which obtained for me this unexpected leave. I gained this point from my habit of looking to see whether a question has an outside. I cite this instance because a precept is never sufficiently recommended until you show how it comes out in practice. As far as my experience goes, the dialetic injunction is true—'Know more than you use. Read and think outside and all around.' Goldsmith, who greatly admired Burke's skill in statement, in argument, and in quietly mastering and crushing error, as a boa constrictor might, said 'Burke wound into a subject like a serpent.' He must therefore have looked outside to discover the most convenient aperture by which he could enter.

CHAPTER XXVI

PULPIT ORATORY

CONSIDERING the many thousands of preachers of all denominations who address every week more or less intelligent congregations, it would be conducive to the public taste as well as pleasure, if each preacher spoke well. Mr Bright was of opinion that no one should be appointed to preach who had not a tolerable voice, and some knowledge of the art of expression. Soldiers of the cross, like other soldiers, should be selected with reference to their capabilities for discharging the duties of the service.

Oratory, the art of public persuasion, might exist in the Church to a greater extent than we find it, but for its dread of imitating the theatre. Art is mostly suppressed among the Dissenters by the influence of evangelism. Did this not exist, their precarious pay would deter them from the pursuit of eloquence. The bar is too full of business and too anxious for fees to reach much distinction. The politician is generally indolent if not dependent; and if necessitous, he has to struggle for himself when he should be struggling for excellence. General Ludlow, whose maxim the reader has seen, said a man 'should say what he means, and mean what he says.' This is rhetoric, because it means sincerity, and sincerity is persuasion to all who know no more than the speaker. Sincerity is not errorless; the most honest man may be mistaken, but the logician should never be mistaken. Logic is the art of

avoiding error, and should be one of the attainments of every preacher. Cardinal Newman was of this opinion. In a remarkable passage, he says:—

'One main portion of intellectual education, of the labours of both school and university, is to remove the original dimness of the mind's eye, to strengthen and perfect its vision; to enable it to look out into the world right forward, steadily and truly; to give the mind clearness, accuracy, precision; to enable it to use words aright, to understand what it says, to conceive justly what it thinks about, to abstract, compare, analyse, divide, refine and reason correctly. There is a particular science which takes these matters in hand, and it is called logic; but it is not by logic—certainly not by logic alone—that the faculty I speak of is acquired. The infant does not learn to spell and read the hues upon his retina by any scientific rule; nor does the student learn accuracy of thought by any manual or treatise. The instruction given him, of whatever kind, if it be really instruction, is mainly, or at least pre-eminently, this—a discipline in accuracy of mind.'

Mr Spurgeon, who made pleasantry popular in the pulpit, used to tell young preachers how he went with a friend to the Crystal Palace one day, and going to the rifle range his friend took a shot and made a 'centre,' and he seemed proud of it. But there were two targets, one on the right, and one on the left, and the man in charge said, 'Which target did the gent aim at?' His friend answered, 'The right-hand one.' 'I thought so,' said the man, 'for you hit the left one.' That was not a creditable thing to a marksman, though he succeeded in hitting something. Mr Spurgeon said it was no credit to a minister to win a soul by inadvertence. He should aim, and learn the art of hitting what he aimed at.

The principles of oratory, which conduce to secular efficiency, are necessary to excellence in the spiritual sphere. As the law of causation which reigns in matters extend

to mind, so the laws of rhetoric reign in divinity as well as in the drama.

A lecture, a speech, a sermon, or a conversation, is like a city in which you seek a destination. Unless the pathway of the meaning is clearly marked by relevant words, the listener will never find his way to it. If you leave any nameless openings, his thoughts will turn down there, and you will be at the end of your argument before the mind of the hearer gets back to it.

Sometimes preachers so treat their hearers that they know not what they are to get back to. Some years ago, I went to hear the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers and the Rev. Dr R. W. Dale, when those eminent ministers went through the land in exposition and vindication of Nonconformity of the Congregationalist type. But neither of them when speaking in the Dome, Brighton, ever said what Congregationalism was. Its aim, I understand, is to increase the life of the Church, and many of the great audience whom they attracted, who were of that persuasion, doubtless knew all about it. These brilliant propagandists appeared to assume that all the audience did. Three-fourths of the assembly, to my knowledge, had not the remotest idea of Congregationalism as a distinctive religious democracy. The first thing a preacher should think of is, that three-fourths of a miscellaneous congregation have little knowledge of what he is talking about.

Though we must admit that illiterate passion affects us more than learning without it, we must keep in view that this passion is the passion of conviction. All the rest is, to Englishmen, rant. The passion of conviction is modest, manly and earnest. If the conviction is manifestly founded on knowledge and reason, and is seen to be based on what Grote happily called 'reasoned truth,' it is omnipotent.

Massillon, like Demosthenes, won renown by virtue of compression, coherency, energy of statement, and vigour of insight. He had the penetration to see what others

overlooked, and when he showed to his auditors what all might but did not see, they were astounded. How many profess to relinquish the things of this world—but how few do it.

'Where are they,' Massillon exclaims, 'who renounce, in good faith, the pleasures, customs, maxims and hopes of the world? All have made the promise—who have kept it? We see many people who complain of the world; who accuse it of injustice, ingratitude, caprice; who inveigh bitterly against it; who speak loudly of its abuses and errors; but in denouncing it they love it, follow it, and cannot do without it; in complaining of its injustices they are angry, but not disabused; they feel its evil treatments, but do not recognise its dangers; they censure it, but where are those who hate it? And by that may be very well judged the people who make pretence to salvation. In fine, you have uttered the anathema against Satan and his works; and what are his works? Those which compose, well-nigh, the thread and entire course of your life; the pomps, the plays, the pleasures, the spectacles, the illusions of which he is the father, the pride of which he is the model, the jealousies and the contentions of which he is the artificer.'

Massillon understood that overdoing was undoing, and stopped at the point of effect. It was Voltaire who, more than any other writer, made the fame of Massillon. At passages like these, and the one previously quoted, Voltaire said in the Encyclopædia, the audience were 'stirred by a sort of involuntary motion, the whole assembly started up from their seats, and such murmurs of surprise and acclamation arose as disconcerted the speaker, though they increased the effect of his discourse.'

The business of a preacher is to represent his master—not himself. His art is but the light by which the great picture is seen. The purity and quality of that light is important. It reveals everything, but never draws attention

to itself. Edward Irving was very desirous that Robert Hall should hear him preach. This came to pass, and when Hall was asked what he thought of Irving's impassioned eloquence, he answered, 'He presented a magnificent picture, but stood too much in front of it himself.'

A story is told of Massillon which many have heard and supposed to be of more recent origin. It is said that one day, when he was preaching upon the Passion before Louis XIV. and all the court, he so affected his hearers that everybody was in tears except one citizen, who appeared as indifferent to what he heard as to what he saw. One of his neighbours, surprised at such insensibility, said to him, 'How can you refrain from weeping, while we are all bathed in tears?' 'That is not astonishing,' answered the citizen, 'I am not of this parish.' The eloquence which I have endeavoured to describe would have included this man also in the general weeping; just as the preaching of Whitefield emptied the pockets of Franklin, the greatest utilitarian economist who ever listened to him. Was it not Whitefield of whom it was written—

> Grant some of knowledge greater store,
> More learned some in teaching;
> Yet few in life did lighten more,
> Or thunder more in preaching?

The common impression is that Whitefield had revivalist rudeness and passion. On the contrary, he had extreme grace of manner. He had art as well as fervency, and the union made him irresistible to his hearers, to whatever parish they belonged.

Having regard to the dreadful message many preachers elect to deliver, which no art can render humane, which must freeze the manner of the deliverer, the sincere preacher must find his art more difficult than other speakers. The Duchess of Buckingham, who had heard Whitfield's message, wrote to the Countess of Huntingdon, who favoured his communion, saying,—

'It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretch who crawls the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good-breeding.'

No doctrine that is true ought to be deemed repulsive. The object of the pulpit orator is to persuade the minds of men to the acceptance of sacred truth. But to do this effectually, he must not only choose times and seasons, but his audience. In the earlier days of co-operation it suffered from neglect of this precaution. Some earnest speakers delighted to make statements which had the effect of an electric shock upon hearers. They exceeded Prudhon, who said in his sharp, naked way, that property was robbery, which represented all mankind as engaged in thieving. If any one desirous of arresting the attention of certain passengers in a crowded street should roll a skittle ball among them, all who had india-rubber ankles might find the percussion tolerable: but those with tender shins would be so wounded and wroth that they would, when they recovered, be disposed to kick the indiscriminate gentleman who had attacked them so sharply. If a man could pass an electric shock through a crowd, he might do good to some by the excitement he would create, but a good part of the feebler sort he would knock down. So it is when the shocks of logic are sent indiscriminately through the human understanding; some minds are knocked quite over by it, and never recover. This is too little thought of in preaching. It is a serious thing to shock the wrong persons. It may shatter them. The mind may be splintered as well as a bureau, and never be good for much after. If we regard the process of treating conviction as a science, then we must be reasonable in the use of reason. Sterne cites it as a sign of Providence, that God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. Most persons who give attention to the art of diffusing new opinions will quite agree that it is wise sometimes to temper

the fierce wind of logic to the feeble intelligence shorn of robust strength. If the experienced eye is discerning enough, it may see lying all around the fierce logician, prostrate and shattered minds, in the last agonies of new ideas, which have struck them mercilessly and fatally. Beyond all doubt there are many persons whose notions are so heavy, dull and matted together, that thought cannot move within them, and a vigorous disintegrating shock is the best thing for them. Their minds are loosened thereby, and they become able to think. But this class of persons should be got together when addressed, and what is said to them should not be reported, or that will happen which Bishop Colenso relates. When he had explained to a Zulu chief the minatory character of salvation, he did not contradict the bishop, but answered like a gentleman, 'It may be true, but I would rather not believe it.' It is a maxim in modern hydropathy that what shocks, or pains, or creates revulsion, is wrong, and may create new diseases. Pressnitz killed his own discovery by severity in treatment. Smedley reanimated it by making hydropathic healing agreeable. When Fox was canvassing Westminster he asked a butcher in St James' market for his vote, who answered, 'Sir, I admire your head, but damn your heart.' To which Fox replied, 'Sir, I admire your candour, but damn your manners.' There should be faithfulness and candour in the pulpit, but it will be more effective if considerately expressed.

Though the clerical orator should not repel by austerity, neither should he seek to advance his views by jocoseness. The nature of the best religion demands a cheerful reverence —but reverence in language there must be. Mr Spurgeon sometimes stepped over the boundary which separates pleasantry from buffoonery. When Bishop Disney sent over to England some negro evangelists from Canada, one sang 'The Old Sexton.' The lines—

> I gather them in! for man and boy,
> Year after year of grief and joy,

I've builded the houses that lie around,
In every nook of this burial-ground;
Mother and daughter, father and son,
Come to my solitude, one by one,
But come they strangers, or come they kin,
'I gather them in, I gather them in,'

were sung with a pathos that moved every heart. Then came a song beginning,—

I'm born of God, I know I am,
And you deny it, if you can,
I want to go to heaven when I die,
To shout salvation as I fly.

There was no palpitating hope here, as to who would 'gather them in' at the last day. The tone of the song was that of singers, who would gather themselves in. All this took place at the Mansion House in London. Merchants who had taken out their cheques to give to the mission put them up again as these jocose, irreverent songs proceeded. The Egyptian Hall contained many of the first Christian families of London. How could they be expected to subscribe for promoting theological teaching of this description? There may be poor negroes to whom this revivalist chatter has charms for their humble minds, but these Canadian coloured men and women, who were singers, were capable of nobler things, and gave proof how well they could sing songs of tenderness and moving sentiment. Why were they not advised to sing only such songs? Christianity should never be comic. Yet many ministers who would not commit this fault themselves will countenance it in others as good enough for the multitude—betraying their cause thereby.

But consistency is more difficult than decorum in piety. Criticism, like competition, is sharper in these days, when intelligence is more general, than heretofore; and the pulpit orator should understand that his hearers find it hard to believe in the sincerity of any man who tells you the words

of the Lord are true, and who knows he has said, 'My people shall not sow and another reap, they shall not plant and another gather,' yet see this done every day, and they aid and abet it and act it themselves. The pulpit orator who is the advocate of well-discerned Christian consistency in social life, would convince and conciliate adversaries as no mere rhetoric can.

A good voice has an advantage in the pulpit as well as on the platform, and he who is a master of sense as well as sound, will command a high place in public opinion. But, as popular education goes, voice will do more for a preacher than matter, since a man who can be heard has a chance of attention, while he who is not audible has none. Besides, people naturally like sounds which come to them of their own accord, and need no effort to hear. Moreover, a hundred persons may be entertained and even satisfied by cadence and vocalisation for ten who will be capable of intellectual appreciation of what is said and whose enjoyment depends upon its purport.

When a deputation of elders were sent from New York to Chicago to invite Dr Robert Collyer to be their minister, they had but one misgiving,—'Would his voice fill the place?' 'If that is all,' said the doctor, 'I shall do, for my voice is cramped in Chicago.' His voice would reach across a prairie. If John the Baptist spoke with his pleasant power I do not wonder that the desert was crowded with hearers. Strong sense borne on a strong voice is influential speaking. When weighty sense sets out on a weak voice it falls to the ground before it reaches distant listeners.

Preachers have always had trouble with drowsy hearers of the word. Even Puritan ministers had to have recourse to 'woodchuck' contrivances to keep their congregations awake. In 1646, the Rev. Dr Samuel Whiting was minister of Lynn, Massachusetts. One Obadiah Turner kept a journal at that time. The following is an extract:—

'1646, June ye 3d. Allen Brydges hath bin chose to wake ye sleepers in meeting, and, being much proud of his place, must needs have a fox taile fixed to ye end of a long staff wherewith he may brush the faces of them yt will have naps in time of discourse; likewise a sharp thorn wherewith he may prick such as be most sounde. On ye last Lord his day, as he strutted about ye meeting house, he did spy Mr Tomkins sleeping with much comforte, his head kept steadie by being in ye corner, and his hand grasping ye rail. And soe spying, Allen did quickly thrust his staff behind Dame Ballard, to give him a grievous prick on ye hand. Whereupon Mr Tomkins did spring up much above ye floor, and with terrible force strike his hand against ye wall, and also, to ye great wonder of all, profainlie exclaim in a loud voice, "Curs the woochuch!" he dreaming, as it seemed, yt a woochuch had seized and bit his hand. But on comeing to know where he was, and ye great scandall he had committed, he seemed much abashed, but did not speak. And I think he will not soone again go to sleepe in meeting. Ye women may sometimes sleep and none know it, by reason of their enormous bonnets. Mr Whiting does pleasantli say yt from the pulpit he doth seem to be preaching to stacks of straw with men jotted here and there among them.'

Were there only natural art in reading Scriptures and collects in the churches there would be no need of an Allen Brydges the Waker to walk the aisles.

When in Washington, one of my delights was to wander into negro churches. There was one church of coloured people, well to do, and therefore more conventional in their worship. There was another and humbler church, to which I preferred to go, which I found more genuine, and therefore more entertaining and instructive.

The preacher who conducted the services was beyond the middle age, and of sedate, honest aspect. His reading of the Scripture was the most religious reading I heard in

America. It was slow, distinct, impressive, earnest, now hushed, now loud, now a cadence of alarm. His tone changed with the sense, with natural dramatic passion, as though the reader comprehended the words of Heaven, and was reading them aloud for the first time. It was not like the reading I had heard in the morning in the President's church, where the lessons were read with what seemed to me a cold propriety, in which all the tragic pathos of the sacred story was frozen in the preacher's throat; it was earnestness in a refrigerator.

The negro sermon was in keeping with the reading. The coloured gospel was not bad—peculiar, but seldom extravagant. Its discernment and candour would surprise any English hearer. 'My brethren,' said the preacher, 'Christ bid us love our enemies. David was a man after God's own heart, but David did not do this.' The preacher said this merely, and left it as a thing to be noted, and not to be explained away. 'We should have clean hands,' he remarked. 'Clean hands do not mean hands clean according to nature, it means clean souls.' The conclusion of his sermon was an exhortation, after the manner of preachers, but in the vein of his race. 'My brethren, pray! You can telegraph to God. You can telegram right away. The man is always at the other end. You can telegram at midnight, the man at the wheel is always awake. Always awake, my brothers and sisters. Pray! brothers, pray! The office is always open, the man is always at the wheel. Brothers and sisters, telegram right away.' The preacher had got his figures of speech a little mixed. He was thinking of the ship when he spoke of the 'man at the wheel.' Still, he managed his simile pretty effectively, and the comparison between the speed of a telegram and a prayer was creditable to his powers of illustration. He was quite understood. Some laughed, some smiled, some made audible assent, especially two rows of dark sisters dressed in

resplendent blue dresses—members of the 'Society of Moses.'

In days when only written books existed, those able to read them must have been impressed by them in a degree unknown to us. Then men knew less than now, but what they knew they knew better. When the Bible was chained to the altar of the Church, crowds must have hung upon the lips of the reader as they heard for the first time what they took to be the actual words of God. What curiosity, impatience and astonishment were to be read in the faces of the auditors! What awe, what reverence, what pathos, what passion there would be in the tones of the reader! If preachers had the original belief of the coloured reader of Washington, and were to read as he read, churches would have more frequenters than they have now. It is recognised now that there is all the difference in the world between a man feeling not that he must say something, but that he has something to say. This is as true in the pulpit as Parliament.

The Rev. Dr Joseph Parker—who, when a young preacher, had merely a good presence, a good voice, facility and fervour of speech—owes all his distinction to himself, by the cultivation of strong natural powers. He has given it as his opinion, that 'until there is better hearing there will not be better preaching.' This may be true in one sense. No preacher would think of delivering the same quality of sermon before auditors of known intelligence which he would preach to a congregation not known to have any. Dr Parker can hardly intend to say that the hearers are to raise the preacher, whose duty it is to raise his hearers. Dr Parker did not wait for this. He has made his hearers. It is true that neither orator nor preacher can go much further than his auditors can see; for when he is out of sight his influence ceases. A preacher is a leader, but he cannot lead unless he is ahead of his hearers. When his subject is beyond their range of knowledge he must be informing and

explanatory. He need not lower the truth, but raise the understanding of those to whom it is addressed. If that be the preacher's endeavour he will do much to elevate his hearers. Once I was a guest of a rector for whom I had personal affection. For two Sundays I sat in the family pew. His sermons had no relation to anything in the heavens above or the earth beneath. Yet he excelled in his knowledge of this world. Such sermons, however well intended, could not elevate the parochial hearers in a century. Dr Parker is the only divine who has advised —what I thought I was alone in advising years ago, namely —that preachers who have to preach twice on a Sunday should preach a sermon of the great orators of the Church once in the day, and reserve their unwearied minds for their own discourse. The sermons of the Fathers of the Church and orators of Dissent, from early times to the present, afford a mighty field of selection. Wealth of illustration, felicity of expression, splendour of ideas, and passion, lie there mostly unknown to preachers and almost entirely so to modern, busy, narrow-minded, uninformed congregations —narrow-minded because ignorant of the brilliant sermons with which the pulpit orators of every denomination have enriched and delighted the minds of the generation in which they lived. A preacher who knows how to read, who has good discernment of relevant passages, judgment not to make them too long, and preface them by an account of who the preacher was, would command grateful hearers, whom he would reform, gratify and refine. A great play delights as often as it is well acted; why should not a great sermon, when well spoken? Acquaintedness with great discourses would often improve the preacher as well as his flock. As Butler said long ago:—

> All smatterers are more brisk and pert
> Than those that understand an art,
> As little sparkles shine more bright
> Than glowing coals that give them light.

Professor Francis William Newman, a man of wider information than his brother, the cardinal, told me he deemed it beyond his power to preach a sermon every week—he who never spoke, or wrote any mean or incomplete thing, measured a sermon by a standard of his own. One minister I have known, who, though always preaching, was always fresh, was Henry Ward Beecher. His ideas were inexhaustible. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's definition of the essential requisites of modern preaching are 'simplicity, flexibility, spontaneity and earnestness'—qualities of his own preaching, aided by a voice which travels like a bird over the audience and along the galleries. Ward Beecher had the four qualities above named, with the addition of imagination; always bright and often poetical, when every sentence was tinted with a hue of its own, as is the case with sermons by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, which a connoisseur in pulpit orations would know when he saw them quoted, though no preacher's name was appended to them.

When a young man, I heard a sermon by the Rev. William Knibb, a Baptist minister, whose life was wasted in Jamaica, begin with these words, which I still remember, 'In the days when infantine Christianity went forth to battle with the full-grown powers of superstition and darkness.' His picturesque sentences continued to the end, his unfaltering swiftness and distinctness I have never heard exceeded.

It was said of Morley Punshon, whom I sometimes heard —a preacher of renown in his day—'He did not create; he did not inform; he did not reason; he did not criticise —he set forth things vividly.' That was a great merit; he held the field but did not extend it.

'Parsons of York,' as he was called (as men spoke of Jay of Bath, or Hall of Leicester—preachers who are remembered as no one else of those towns is) in later years, whatever may have been the case earlier, broke up his sentences with a dry hacking cough for the first fifteen

minutes. Still the sentences went on their coherent way. Afterwards he suffered no interruption when the stately argument of his oration rose high before the hearer, who remembered it long after as though he had seen a great sight. It was in Whitefield Chapel, London, where I heard Parsons. Though unlike his famous predecessor in that place, those who heard Parsons left him, as men are said to have left Whitefield, with the impression that they had heard a master of the pulpit.

Sydney Smith complained in his day of the cold decorum of the pulpit. He said: 'The great object of modern sermons is to hazard nothing; their characteristic is decent debility, which alike guards their authors from ludicrous errors, and precludes them from striking beauties. Every man of sense, in taking up an English sermon, expects to find it a tedious essay, full of common-place morality; and if the fulfilment of such expectations be meritorious, the clergy have certainly the merit of not disappointing their readers.'

Since his day, preachers of note have arisen in the church. Neither Kingsley, nor Maurice, nor Bishop Magee were conventional in their preaching. Still, too many Church preachers are dull. Many of them are happily sent abroad. I have heard a colonial bishop so insipid and unimpressive of speech, that he could not convert on his own coast, where hearers had the advantage of knowing his tongue, much less those to whom he would speak in a language or accent foreign to them.

Preaching can never be what it might be, could the other side be heard after the discourse. The clergyman who told a great lawyer that his was a fascinating profession —was answered, 'Preaching is a better one, as the opposite party has no right of reply.' Ten lawyers have more alertness, many-sidedness, and circumspection than a hundred preachers. They know their learned brother lies in wait to question every unprovable statement they make. The

Catholic clergy knew they lost weight by being all on one side, and invented the Devil's Advocate that the other side might be heard. But this advocate seldom put in an appearance, and when he did he was a poor substitute for the original, if his abilities are rightly reported. Were even a second-hand Satan to attend every Sunday, preaching would rapidly improve in truth, fairness and force. Then a hearer would seldom have to say of a preacher, as an observing woman did: In the first place he read his sermon; in the second he did not read it well; and in the third it was not worth reading.

As to the manner of preaching, Dr Leifchild's rules for preaching would ruin any preacher—

> Begin low,
> Go on slow;
> Rise higher,
> And take fire;
> When most impressed
> Be self-possessed;
> At the end wax warm
> And sit down in a storm.

A preacher would be ridiculous in a month who did this twice a week. Shakespeare's advice to players is far wiser. Warmth will vary with conviction, and energy with earnestness and the nature of the subject. The close of a discourse should be better spoken than the explanatory parts. It may end in resounding sentences, or, like a farewell song of love, its last cadence may die in the air, leaving an impression which will never fade in the mind of the hearer.

If a preacher wants to know what he is going to say—or, better, wants to know what he ought to say—let him write out his sermon, not for the purpose necessarily of reading it to his congregation, but for the purpose of reading it to himself. He will never discover what links of argument he has omitted in an intended extempore speech—he will

never become aware of the redundancies, contradictions, undesigned repetitions and incoherences of arrangement — —until he writes right off what is in his mind. When he has revised, pruned, amplified where necessary, and given sequence where wanting, let him make marginal notes of the purport of each essential passage, and preach from these notes. Such was the advice of Professor Hall to an American divinity class of which he had charge. There is no better rule to follow. It fixes a comprehensive outline of the intended sermon in the mind. Written passages and illustrations will recur to the memory. There will be confidence, flexibility and coherence—audibility and earnestness will do the rest.

CHAPTER XXVII

PLATFORM READING

No one of taste would prefer a sermon or speech, poor in quality and incoherent in texture, extemporarily delivered—to a discourse or oration, compact in expression and strong in sense—read well. It is bad reading which brings reading into comparative contempt or dislike. Reading, like any other form of oratory, has its conditions, which are seldom thought of.

Sometimes a speech or an address will be read from a quarto book, written in a small hand, over which the reader stumbles. The hearer counts the turning over of the monotonously-spoken pages, to calculate when the end of his misery will come, when, to his utter dismay, he perceives that the pages are written at the back, and when the end was thought to be in sight, the dreadful lecturer, or speaker, begins to turn the leaves over and read the backs, when the period of the hearer's release is indefinitely postponed.

I have seen a preacher read a sermon in small, badly-written, interlined pages, which no one who once took his eyes off the place he had come to, could, without delay, find it again. I have seen a prize paper read from a small printed pamphlet which did not permit the reader once to look at his audience, without missing a sentence or two, and so rapidly and insipidly was it spoken, that an audience in a penitentiary would not listen to it to the end. I

have seen a Dean read an address in minute handwriting. He, being near-sighted, had to hold the pages close to his face. All the auditors could see was a bundle of white leaves and a bald head behind it, and the voice issuing from the rear of the pages was so indistinct and cadenceless that the words were all swallowed by the persons three rows before him, for they reached no further, and the audience at the back had to seek from those in front a second-hand report of what was supposed to have been said, of which no one was sure.

At the British Association I have seen a president read his inaugural address from long proof slips, just as the printer sent them. The president had to ask the secretary for his address, of which the secretary had only one copy—and that he could not find when wanted. Nothing could be more humiliating to president or audience than to read to, or to be read to, from printers' slips, which take all dignity out of the occasion, even if the reading was fairly spoken. But the president, being a professor, despised emphasis, inflection, or passion, as unphilosophical. The audience had a bad time of it, and applauded only when the address ended, and because it had ended. Philosophers might be expected to do these things better.

University reading is, as a rule, more insipid than clerical. The professor's object is to say in a paper (when he reads one) exactly what ought to be known. Students bent upon knowledge, with their minds already occupied with the subject submitted to them, and seeking information important to them—bend a willing ear, and are grateful for the ideas they want, and heed not, and care not, how colourless and tame-toned are the words spoken. Many professors, as I have seen, when they come before the public as preachers or scientists, will deliver their message in the most spiritless manner to an audience ignorant alike of its matter and its moment, whom they inspire not only with dislike but with resentment against speaker and subject.

The pulpit or platform orator who cares only for the judgment of the few, whose attainments give weight to their opinions, may read anyhow, provided he has ideas which the few covet. But if he calls together a miscellaneous audience, or connives at their being assembled, and does not intend to entertain or instruct them, he ought to be liable to indictment for obtaining attention under false pretences. Some preachers affect not to read their sermons; but they do it, and their congregations know it. If a man cannot speak—in pulpit or on platform—from notes of the kind described in the last chapter, he had better read openly; and if done properly it will be effective.

The method is this. After writing out the speech or discourse, twice or thrice if necessary, read it aloud to someone whom you wish to interest in it. A reader gets thereby quite a new idea of what he has written. If any part is not understood by the listener, that part must be made clear. If any part or phrase strikes the listener as not being in good taste, reconsider it. One object in reading the discourse aloud is to note the time it takes to read it with audibility. If it occupies an hour it should be abridged until it can be easily read in three-quarters of an hour. That allows one quarter for the expansion of public reading, which will be slower, fuller in tone, and allow for pauses between new paragraphs. No discourse, as a rule, should exceed one hour.

When the whole statement intended to be made is satisfactory as to terms and length, it should be copied out on large note-sized paper, in a handwriting sufficiently bold to be easily read at a distance from the eye. The initial capital letters should be print capitals, so as to mark clearly the beginning of a new sentence. Up strokes and down strokes should be short, so that one line does not hang down into another, nor project above, causing confusion or entanglement of words. The paper used should be some-

what stiff, so that one page can be easily raised by itself. The writing should be on one side only The speaker or preacher should write out the copy himself. He will know better the words he himself has formed, and become so familiar with the text as to know it almost by heart. Finally, he should underline with a coloured pencil such words or sentences on which the emphasis is to fall, just as the acting copy of a play is underscored. Then the speech is ready to be read. When the time comes to deliver it, the pages should be held in one hand, and by a careless movement let the auditors perceive that nothing is written at the back, and as each page is read it should be laid on a table at hand, so that the hearers may know that as the pages decrease the end of their detention draweth nigh.' Now, a speech so prepared can be held at a distance from the reader. He will know at a glance the contents of the page, and the part marked for emphasis will tell him the important words. On reading the beginning of a sentence he will often know the rest, and feel himself free to look the audience in the face and use such gestures as the sentiment suggests. Additions or explanations—amplifications of phrases he may find needful, and illustrations will come into his mind—for which he has left himself time. By holding his thumb at the sentence where he commenced to interpolate, he can come back instantly to the place, and thus acquire a freedom and spontaneity of delivery more effective than ordinary extempore speeches, which lack vigour, relevance and brightness.

The Rev. Mr Bellew, though a sonorous and eloquent preacher, delighted his congregation more by reading sermons than by preaching them. Mr J. S. Laurie, in his *Training of Teachers*, says, 'Reading aloud, in any sense other than the mere naming of vocables, is an act of intelligence, and an act requiring an even higher intelligence as the subject-matter of what is read grows in subtlety and complexity. Even with the help of more disciplined and

better-informed minds, very few of the middle and upper classes can read in a style that satisfies at once the understanding and the ear of a cultivated listener. Probably no accomplishment is more conclusive evidence that a boy has been educated than the power of reading well.' Good reading requires good judgment and good preparation, as oratory does. This means trouble, and trouble is not taken save by those whose aim is excellence. I remember a writer saying, 'I once spent the night with a clergyman, an old friend, who had the habit of reading his sermons. I asked him why he did so. He went on to give me the reasons, and became animated. "Well," said I, "I am tired to-night, but I have been very much interested in what you said. Nevertheless, if you had *read* your remarks I should have gone to sleep."' That was because the rector was a mere conventional reader. Had he read his sermons as he would read a letter to his family giving them information of a legacy, each bequest to each person would be read with congratulatory emphasis, and none would go to sleep.

French and American audiences will accept written speeches. The French read like an oration. The speeches which stirred all the world in the French Convention were written and read. Some Americans abuse the privilege of reading in the Legislative Chamber, making their speeches too long for any human purpose, and so reading them that nobody listens, or ought to listen to them. The French read papers and make their addresses often too long for lasting impression, but then they do read them with an almost superhuman animation.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FIGURES OF SPEECH

IT is by similes that ideas are made vivid, argument enlivened, and obscurity made clear. The term above—'Figures of Speech'—is used in the sense of comparisons, similitudes, symbols, likenesses, and generally such descriptions of things in which the imagination discovers an instructive resemblance to the subject to be explained. A figure of speech is a mirror in which a subject is unexpectedly reflected in a new light. A simile is the comparison of another thing to the one in question, the likening of two things which, though differing in some respects, have strong points of resemblance. The one rule being, if the object is to exalt a subject, to make a noble comparison. If the purpose is to degrade a subject, the comparison made should serve to lower it in the reader's estimation. Errors and oversights in these respects are of daily occurrence. A preacher to whom I often listened with pleasure in days when I was an habitual hearer of the word, one day reproached Christians with not using their minds for making sure of the grounds of their convictions, adding, that they put out their thinking as people did their washing, and got it done badly. This offended many of his congregation, for some of them could think. The preacher's simile implied that his congregation had dirty ideas—for that, and that alone, is why

garments are sent to the laundry. The laundress does not make garments, but merely cleans them; whereas, what the preacher—to his credit—wanted, was that his hearers should form ideas of their own, without which a man is mentally naked or bedizened in second-hand clothes, and he should have sought a simile which suggested this. The one he chose did not touch the case. The congregation did not suffer from dirty ideas, else he had badly instructed them. What they suffered from was scantness of ideas, which could only be worthily increased by their own efforts.

Some time ago a noble lord, who, like his father before him, had high regard for Mr Gladstone, told a public meeting of Liberals that it might be said of Mr Gladstone in the words of Shakespeare:—

> He doth bestride this narrow world
> Like a Colossus; and we, petty men,
> Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
> To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Now, the bestriding man referred to was a dangerous tyrant. It was a bad compliment to compare Mr Gladstone to him. Then it follows also that the lesser Liberals are 'petty men, who creep about to find themselves dishonourable graves.' So the speaker smote Mr Gladstone and all his adherents hip and thigh by one simile, of whose range and application he could have given no thought. Had the speaker compared Mr Gladstone to the King of Brobdignag, and his followers to men of good but lesser build; or by other simile which suggested that Mr Gladstone was the Saul of his party—head and shoulders above any of them—he had exalted him whom he intended to exalt, and not called up adverse reflections. It may serve to show with what circumspection similes should be employed if I point out that the last one I have given is open to objection on a political platform—for Saul was mad some-

times, a fact which a quick adversary would turn to good account.

Not long ago Lady Henry Somerset, in a much-applauded address, said that a bear leader whom she saw in Switzerland, told her that when he wanted the bear to dance he kept pulling the string. That was what 'the people of England must do with their leaders in respect of temperance, and she was sure they would dance.' This should have been said when the reporters had left, as being better suited for private than for public consumption. To tell public men you consider them street bears, who will dance only when you pull the string round their necks, is to do all you can to prevent leaders doing anything you wish. It sets their self-respect against you. It is smart speaking if you do not think of the result. Lady Somerset is an engaging lady, and if she, or others like her, pulled the string, no doubt there would be dancing if the dancers could forget that she thinks them 'bears.'

There is an Australian weapon called a boomerang, which, when thrown, comes back and hits the thrower. Beware of boomerang arguments, or boomerang similes. For instance, if misled by pessimist text you should say all men are corrupt, your opponent might say: 'As all men are so, so you must be. Thank you for the admission of your conscious rottenness, of which it did not occur to me to accuse you.' That was the reply I made to a Dr Rowbotham who asked me to assist his advocacy, after declaring on a London platform that all men had putrid principles. I thought such principles did not require aid in development.

Robert Owen's principles have often been described but never made so clear as by citing a simile of Victor Hugo. 'Men are like nettles. Cultivation will turn them from noxious to useful plants. There are no bad herbs or bad men; there are only bad cultivators.' This is Robert Owen's philosophy in a nutshell.

If kings were not better than they are supposed to be, they would be worse than they are, breathing, as they do, the air of fulsomeness. Royalty has always been a patient, and at times a greedy, recipient of egregious adulation. It is Macaulay, I think, who says the oratory devoted to James I., on his progress through Scotland, was of no common cast. Officials who addressed him at the various towns at which he arrived, 'put together Augustus, Alexander, Trajan and Constantine. It was supposed that even the antipodes heard of his courtesy and liberality; the very hills and groves were said to be refreshed with the dew of his aspect; in his absence the citizens were languishing gyrades, in his presence delighted lizards, for he was the sunshine of their beauty. At Glasgow, Master Hay, the commissary, when attempting to speak before him, became like one touched with a torpedo, or seen of a wolf; and the Principal of the University, comparing his majesty with the sun, observed, to that luminary's disadvantage, that King James had been received with incredible joy and applause, whereas a descent of the sun into Glasgow would in all likelihood be extremely ill taken. Hyperbole was not sufficient—the aid of prodigies was called—a boy of nine years old harangued the king in Hebrew, and the schoolmaster of Linlithgow spoke verses in the form of a lion.' That was better than a good deal of adulation of royalty, which is often presented in the form of an ass. When literature first became common, rhetoric grew tawdry, and degenerated into what Dr Parker calls the 'Berlin wool and fancy work' style of statement. A strong simplicity is always force.

To preserve peace, and to do good, is a dull old maxim of morality. Feltham thus enlivens it by this illustration:—'When two goats on a narrow bridge met over a deep stream, was not he the wiser that lay down for the other to pass over him, rather than he that would hazard both their lives by contending? He preserved himself from danger, and made the other become debtor to him for his

safety. I will never think myself disparaged either by preserving peace or doing good.'

Paine, whom I have heard Ebenezer Elliot describe as the greatest master of metaphor he had known, said of a certain body in America, who professed that principle was higher than interest, were nevertheless 'hunting after their own advantage with a step as steady as time, and an appetite as keen as death.' Their insatiableness is rendered more evident by these similes. Describing the illuminated popularity of a political quack—one Silas Deene—Paine said, 'He went up like a rocket and came down like the stick.' Mirabeau, when asked to counsel an obstinate friend, answered, 'You might as well make an issue in a wooden leg as give him advice.' Emerson, at the *soirée* of the Manchester Athenæum, expressing the latent strength of Old England, said it 'had still a pulse like a cannon.' Speaking elsewhere of the freshness of the style of Montaigne, Emerson said his sentences were 'vascular and alive—if you cut them they would bleed.' The *Cork Magazine* says, that the preface of Thomas Davis to the speeches of Curran is in some parts as majestic as the orations which it prefaces; in others, displaying a wild pathos, which 'strikes upon the ear like the cry of a woman.'

Comparisons are implied by phrases. An instance occurs in Cardinal Newman's works, where he says, 'Heresy did but precipitate the truths before held in solution.' The allusion is chemical and a happy one. Contempt for the man-millinery of literature was forcibly expressed by Mirabeau—'My style readily assumes force, and I have a command of strong expressions, but if I want to be mild, unctuous and measured, I become insipid, and my flabby style makes me sick.' Dumont, a friend of Mirabeau's, recounting his own editorial experience in preserving brevity and a wise directness in his journal, says, 'The most diffuse complained of our reducing their dropsical and turgescent expressions.' Grattan, comparing the Irish Parliament to

a human career, exclaimed, 'I have sat by its cradle and I followed its hearse.'

In the *Auditor*, Lord Viscount Barrington was described as 'a little squirrel of State, who had been busy all his life in the cage, without turning it round to any human purpose.' The clearness attained by such similes needs no explanation. Edward Vansittart Neale, when he wished to show how much the profits of productive labour exceed those of distribution, likened the store to the squirrel,—

> Which, whether he turns wood or wire,
> Never gets a hair's-breadth higher,

while the workshop has unlimited possibilities before it. It is of value to intercept the difference between wholesale and retail prices. But the store moves between those two barriers. Mr Neale's simile made clear the advantages of labour acting without limitation.

When Mr Mould, the undertaker in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, speaks of Shakespeare, it is as the theatrical poet who was 'buried' at Stratford. But it matters not whence the similes are drawn, provided they are appropriate and elevating, which was not the case in the sermon preached at Newgate after the escape of Jack Sheppard. The clergyman discoursed to this effect:—

'How dexterously did he pick the padlock of his chain with a crooked nail, burst his fetters asunder, climb up his chimney, wrench out an iron bar—break his way through a stone wall, make the strong door of a dark entry fly before him, reach the leads of the prison, fix a blanket to the wall with a spike stolen from the chapel, descend to the top of the turner's house, cautiously pass downstairs, and make his escape at the street door.

'I shall spiritualise these things. Let me exhort ye, then, to open the locks of your hearts with the nail of repentance; burst asunder the fetters of your beloved lusts; mount the chimney of hope; take thence the bar of good resolution;

break through the stone wall of despair, and force the stronghold in the dark entry of the valley of the shadow of death; raise yourself to the leads of divine meditation; fix the blanket of faith with the spike of the Church; let yourselves down to the turner's house of resignation; descend the stairs of humility. So shall you come to the door of deliverance from the prison of iniquity, and escape from the clutches of that old executioner the devil.'

This style, once popular, might divert a gaol audience, but would not be thought edifying now. Down to this chaplain's days this was thought to be clever composition. The chaplain ought to have been imprisoned for his effort. Its only excuse could be that it amused his gloomy congregation. It could not edify them, and was more likely to produce ridicule than reverence.

Prodigality of metaphors, like multitudes of superlatives, confounds meaning. 'It is an idle fancy of some,' says Felton, 'to run out perpetually upon similitudes, confounding their subject by the multitude of likenesses, and making it like so many things, that it is like nothing at all!'

The child, when he first learns to speak, will say anything, thinking he accomplishes much in continuing to talk. So with the public speaker when he first commences, and so with the early efforts of the young writer. When he first rises above the level of plain prose, he never knows when to descend to the earth; and instead of finding an elevation whence he can show his readers a wider landscape and new objects, he think he does enough by showing himself.

Goodrich relates that a boy being rebuked by a clergyman for neglecting to go to church, replied that he would go if he could be permitted to change his seat. 'But why do you wish to change your seat?' said the minister. 'You see,' said the boy, 'I sit over the opposite side of the meeting-house, and between me and you there's Judy

Vicars and Mary Staples, and half a dozen other women, with their mouths wide open, and they get all the best of the sermon, and when it comes to me it's pretty poor stuff.'

It is doubtful whether any boy ever made this reflection. The story must be pointed at those preachers whose voices are confined to the listeners nearest to them. Nevertheless, likening the sermon to something to be eaten, made vivid the disadvantage of not being able to hear what is provided.

A resemblance of one thing to another is often cited in argument. It is then called an analogy. But it must be remembered that an analogy is not an argument, only an illustration. No two different things can be alike all through, and it is only the points of resemblance cited which should be mainly noticed in reply.

There is sometimes an argument of no mean force in a simile. A soldier, sentenced for an attempt to leave his regiment on Indian service, said in his defence, 'We are not all bad at bottom, but we have at times fever and ague, and then the heart grows faint for England, and we have Europe on the chest.' That soldier, had he been educated, had been a great rhetorician who would have convinced in a few words.

A negro woman, though possessing a scantier vocabulary, can be more vivid of speech than her mistress:—A Washington lady, much surprised upon receiving notice from her dusky cook that she was about to leave her service, in order to be married. 'Why,' said the lady, 'I did not even know you had an admirer.' 'Oh, yes'm, for some time.' 'Who is it, Mary?' 'Don't you 'member, Miss Lissie, that I 'tended a fune'l 'bout two weeks ago? It's the corpse's husband!'

In using figures of speech care must be taken not to change the simile in an incongruous way. There is the well-known American example of the orator who, discovering the artfulness of an opponent, exclaimed, 'I smell a rat

—I see it floating in the air—I nip it in the bud.' In two sentences he converted the rat into a bird and a flower. The Irish have a gift for absurd similes, which are excusable in them because of the humour in which they excel. As when Sir Boyle Roche in affirming his loyalty said, 'I stand prostrate before the Throne.' It was an Hibernian prophet who announced—

> To-night's the day (I state it with great sorrow)
> When all of us will be blown up to-morrow.

But it was an English cleric of confused memory who told his congregation that 'sorrow may endure for a joy but night cometh in the morning.' 'My brethren,' said an aspiring young preacher, 'such a man as I have described is like the captain of a crewless vessel on a shoreless sea. Happy would such a man be to bring his men to land.' There was a glamour of imagination in these words, and it was only afterwards that the hearers reflected that a crewless vessel had no men, and that on a shoreless sea there was no land to put them on. These oratorical aberrations are confined to no country, though more frequent in some than others. It was only the other day that Herr Rickhert taunted the German Ministry, saying, 'We hear nothing upon the Ministerial benches, nothing but profound silence.' This could not be better said in Dublin.

A practical design of these chapters, now nearing their close—which the reader will be glad to perceive—is to call into life the latent power for excellence that every man has, and to guard him against the easy errors into which one inexperienced or uninformed may fall. Errors are forgiven on their first, or even second committal, but the third time they cause distrust. At Muzart Pass, over the Tian Shan Range, a marble monument bears this inscription:—

'He who comes this way once may be pardoned, as not knowing what he is doing. He who comes twice is a fool He who comes a third time is hopeless as a Kaffir.'

The reader of the maxims of the preceding pages may be desirous of illustrating his meaning, when necessary, by some apt figure of speech. If he does, he may make useful things agreeable and dark things clear. In time he will find it as easy as dullness, and more entertaining to others. But he must exercise taste, relevance and circumspection, or he will, as Uncle Eben observes, 'after toiling up the stairway of fame, slide down the bannister into obscurity.'

CHAPTER XXIX

POETRY IN RELATION TO RHETORIC

ALL the public speaker necessarily has to do with poetry is to read it or speak it well. And he will be more likely to do this effectively if he knows that what he cites is poetry, or at least so felicitous in expression as to make vivid the idea he wishes to enforce. To move men to speech it is well, as we have seen, that the speaker should know their nature. For human nature differs in different places as climate does. Did not Dr Angus Smith show that there are more than nineteen distinct climates in London? There are more than nineteen distinct orders of men. How else could there be so many distinct sects? One man believes in that which to another is absolutely incredible. In every town and village the nature of men is of a different texture. Doubtless there are general features in which humanity agrees. But if the object is to show that those who would master human nature had better study it—the speaker may show its strange moods by quoting Mr Lecky's lines on one whose career was inscrutable to his friends,—

> What was the charm that wrought the spell,
> None but himself could see;
> There's a door in every heart that leads to hell,
> Could we but find the key.

Let us hope this is not true; but true or not they are striking lines, and vividly call attention to the unexpected characteristics of human nature.

Of great poets there are too few, and of minor poets too many—some say. But this is not a good judgment—being unfair to the minor rhymers, as though they were permanently inferior; whereas, the great poet was a minor one once, and some of them were very unpromising minors. In his 'Hours of Idleness' Byron gave no foretaste of the qualities of energy and fire which afterwards astonished the world. No poem ever opened with more enchanting lines than 'Endymion,' whose first words were—

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness: but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

The critics of Keats's day saw nothing in this as a presage of power, but the power was there. It was the youthful muse of Tennyson which produced the lines—

> The roar of the wind is around me,
> The leaves of the year at my feet.

It was only W. J. Fox who saw the poet in them.

The reader might not take for poetry the following lines on a friend who is no more, but he would not make much of a mistake if he did:—

> He has forgotten the pathway to our door,
> Something has gone from nature since he died.

If the student looks for newness of thought and force of expression, he will meet with passages which may be successfully quoted.

Some say if, when you have written verses, you find you can better express the chief idea in prose, your verses are not poetry. That does not follow, because there is good poetry in prose. Carlyle, for instance, was a poet who wrote in prose what he was entirely unable to express in verse. If, however, a man who has made verses finds he

can better express himself in prose, he should put his ideas into prose. If the writer of verses, which he takes to be poetry, would write them in prose he would often be undeceived.

It is not easy to give a definition of poetry which shall enable everyone to detect it when he meets it. But an ordinary person who reads two stanzas of Rossetti's 'Blessed Damozel' would be arrested by its beauty of expression and splendour of imagination :—

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

There are astronomical and dynamical objections to this vision, but Burke would have given it a place in his unfinished book on the Sublime and Beautiful.

A passage of no mean beauty occurs in Shelley's 'Prometheus' :—

It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!
Till one in slumber bound
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.

The melody of the language alone would inform the reader that he was in the hands of a master.

Sometimes a poet does not know his own beauty of expression, and changes a term of beauty for one without it, as when Tennyson, having written of Prince Albert dead—

Thou silent father of our kings to be,

altered it into—

Thou noble father of our kings to be.

'Silent' father has the dignity which no one challenges. 'Noble' father is controversial.

It is good practice to write verse. He who attempts it may not become a poet, but he will learn more of the terms, variety and infinite meanings of his own tongue, or of any other tongue he uses, than by any other means. Wordsworth, who was a master in song, wrote once to Sir William Hamilton:—

'Again and again I must repeat that the composition of verse is infinitely more of an art than men are prepared to believe, and absolute success in it depends upon innumerable *minutiæ*, which it grieves me you should stoop to acquire a knowledge of. Milton talks of pouring "easy his unpremeditated verse." It would be harsh, untrue and odious to say there is anything like cant in this, but it is not true to the letter and tends to mislead. I could point out 500 passages in Milton upon which labour has been bestowed, and twice 500 more on which labour would have been serviceable.'

Matthew Arnold, when he is not contemptuous, is instructive. If his sweetness was intermittent, he did not lack light. 'Homer's movement, he says, is a flowing, a rapid movement. Milton's is a laboured, a self-retarding movement. Milton charges himself so full with thought, imagination, knowledge, that his style will hardly contain them. He is too full-stored to show us in much detail one conception, one piece of knowledge; he shows it to us in a pregnant, allusive way, and then presses on to another. Homer is quite different; he says a thing and says it to the end, and then begins another, while Milton is trying to press a thousand things into one.

So that in reading Milton you never lose the sense of laborious and condensed fulness; in reading Homer you never lose the sense of flowing and abounding ease.'

Homer was a poet of life, Tennyson was mainly a poet of mind. Homer sang of actions, Tennyson of ideas. Sir Walter Scott has more of the Homeric quality than any other poet or romance writer of renown. Poets and writers of that mould are better to quote in an oration than a metaphysical poet. Byron is better for the platform than Shelley. There are exceptions, of course, among the kaleidoscopic children of song. All are human at times. Even Browning, who requires a Society to explain him, has splendid flashes of nature, as witness these lines:—

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine—wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

Of prose which has all the qualities of poetry except the metrical form, the reader may find in a passage of Professor Heeren:—

'Persepolis rises above the deluge of years. Time sadly overcometh all things, and is now dominant, and sits upon a sphinx and looketh unto Memphis and Old Thebes; while his sister Oblivion reclineth semi-sensuous on a pyramid, making puzzles of Titanian erections, turning old glories into dreams. History sinketh beneath her cloud. The traveller, as he passeth amazedly through these deserts, asketh of her who builded them? She mumbleth something, but what it is he knoweth not.'

The poet hath not often excelled Heeren. Instance Bryant on the same subject:—

Thou unrelenting Past!
Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,
And fetters sure and fast
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.

Mere rhyme often assists the memory, and, if nervous, it may better strike the understanding than prose. Of this quality are some old lines on Feasting and Fasting, beginning thus:—

Accustom early in your youth
To lay embargo on your mouth;
And let no rarities invite
To pall and glut your appetite;
But check it always, and give o'er
With a desire of eating more;
For where one dies from inanition
A thousand perish by repletion.

There is a mental repletion also enervating to intellectual health.

Dr Johnson, who had prose in his blood, sometimes put it into verse, and though not poetry it was near to it by its vigour and sense. In the prologue he wrote for Garrick on the opening of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, describing the reign of pedantry and degeneracy of the stage, he exclaims:—

Then, crushed by rules, and weaken'd as refined,
For years the power of tragedy declined;
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till declamation roar'd whilst passion slept:
Yet still did virtue deign the stage to tread,
Philosophy remained though nature fled.

Pope, the greatest of our argumentative poets, has no passage more striking than one logical stanza in Lord Byron's 'Childe Harold.' It has vividness, felicity of phrase and condensation. It would be impossible to say the same things in prose in such few words.

What from the barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow and our reason frail,

Life short, and truth a gem that loves the deep,
And all things weighed in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong seem accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes and earth have too much light.

Another example, though devoid of the range of insight manifest in Byron's lines, is the fine sonnet of Blanco White. As a poetic imaginative argument for a future life it is unsurpassed. Literature has no argument so brilliant that I can recall:—

Mysterious night! When our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet, 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay conceal'd
Within thy beams, O Sun? Or who could find,
Whilst fruit, and leaf, and insect stood reveal'd,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why do we, then, shun Death with anxious strife?
If Light conceals so much—wherefore not Life?

For passages of point and fire the orator must go to the poets. One of them exclaims:

Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow.

An agitator may say that without much risk. That means numbers must agree to act all together, and numbers are not given to agree; and if numbers do agree they must keep one counsel if they are to succeed, and numbers can seldom be depended upon to keep one counsel. Shakespeare supplies much more dangerous lines:—

Every bondman in his own hands
Bears the power to cancel his captivity.

Let any man beware how he tells this, to whom, and where.

The Talmud says, 'Life is but a shadow, not of a house, nor of a tree, but of a bird passing overhead; another moment both bird and shadow are gone.' The simile is well conceived. For variety and felicity of figure upon this subject nothing known to me excels the following poem, ascribed to Dr Donovan, who made it, or took it from an old Irish manuscript. The reader will see that the Irish poet is a logician—a rare thing in poets—and sums up each stanza at its conclusion, and each simile is as it were proven.

Like to a damask rose you see,
Or like a blossom on a tree,
Or like the dainty flower in May,
Or like the morning to the day,
Or like the sun, or like the shade;
Or like the gourd, which Jonah made:
Even such is man, whose thread is spun,
Drawn out and out, and so is done.
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,
The sun sets, the shadow flies,
The gourd consumes, the man—he dies.

Like to the grass that's newly sprung,
Or like the tale that's new begun,
Or like the bird that's here to-day,
Or like the pearled dew in May,
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of the swan:
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The grass withers, the tale is ended,
The bird is flown, the dew's ascended,
The hour is short, the span not long,
The swan's near death, man's life is done

Like to the bubble in the brook,
Or in a glass much like a look,

Or like the shuttle in weaver's hand,
Or like the writing on the sand,
Or like a thought, or like a dream,
Or like the gliding of the stream:
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The bubble's out, the look forgot,
The shuttle's flung, the writing's blot,
The thought is past, the dream is gone,
The waters glide, man's life is done.

Like to an arrow from a bow,
Or like swift course of water flow:
Or like the time 'twixt flood and ebb,
Or like the spider's tender web,
Or like a race, or like a goal,
Or like the dealing of a dole:
Even such is man, whose brittle state
Is always subject unto fate.
The arrow shot, the flood soon spent,
The time no time, the web soon rent,
The race soon run, the goal soon won,
The dole soon dealt, man's life soon done.

Like to the lightning from the sky,
Or like a post that quick doth hie,
Or like a quaver in a song,
Or like a journey three days long,
Or like the snow when summer's come,-
Or like a pear, or like a plum:
Even such is man, who heaps up sorrow,
Lives but this day, and dies to-morrow.
The lightning's past, the post must go,
The song is short, the journey so,
The pear doth rot, the plum doth fall,
The snow dissolves, and so must all.

The student in search of similes may take up a basket full from this unrivalled poem.

Nobody could mistake the hand of the poet, in strength of conception and unchangeableness of terms, in Landor's lines:—

Alas! how soon the hours are over,
Counted us out to play the lover

> And how much narrower is the stage
> Allotted us to play the sage.
> But when we play the fool, how wide
> The theatre expands! Besides,
> How long the audience sits before us;
> How many plaudits! What a chorus!

But of this the present writer as well as the student may take warning.

CHAPTER XXX

STYLE EXPLAINED

STYLE is the manner in which ideas are expressed. Style is not in the mind—it is the mind. As Dr Johnson said of the wits of Charles the Second's reign :—

> Themselves they studied—as they felt they writ.

A bitter fountain cannot give forth sweet water. According to the quality of the information in the treasure house of the understanding will be the style—scant or plentiful in words, clear or confused in expression, vivacious or dull, yielding ideas leaden,or golden, gems of paste or diamonds rich and rare. When a man can, like Cobbett, talk with his pen, his style is disclosed. It is said of John Morley that the chief features of his style are 'perfect sanity and reasonableness.' Its special charm, 'simplicity and courtesy.' His hold upon his reader is his scholarship and sincerity.' He has 'urbanity and wit,' still rare in literature.

Style is a quality peculiar to the writer or speaker, and where it has excellence not time itself can efface its charm. Facts may be forgotten, learning grow commonplace, truths dwindle into mere truisms, but a magnificent style can never lose its freshness. Someone has said, 'For style, even more than for his wonderful erudition, is Gibbon admired; and the same quality, and that alone, renders Hume a popular historian of England, in spite of his imperfect learning, the

untrustworthiness of his statements in matters of fact, and the anti-popular caste of his opinions.' Method, perspicuity, brevity, variety, harmony, are indeed separable from sense, but no combination of such qualities will give life to a book without sense. They are but the auxiliaries of meaning, not the substitutes for it.

If any one would know what style is not and how it is not acquired, let him read an article on Dickens in a quarter where there should be guidance, the *Dublin University Magazine*, in or about 1865. It said:—

'Dickens has achieved a great thing—he has created a style. The singular circumstances in this case is that, by careful study of previous styles, by imitation of them, this author has produced out of the heterogeneous elements a compound essentially differing from all its component parts, and claiming—claiming justly—the high merit of being original. That such a result should follow such a course ought to encourage writers who aim at true celebrity to adopt this humble and painstaking initiatory system.'

Dickens would smile at this attempt to make a literary alchemist of him, as one fusing all sorts of styles in his crucible of composition, and bringing out quite a new metal. Daily life furnished him with materials; observation, originality of thought and humorous imagination did the rest—humour combined them and made the style.

Tindal said of Pitt's first speech that 'it was more ornamental than the speeches of Demosthenes and less diffuse than those of Cicero.' 'That it should have been so often quoted,' says Macaulay, 'is proof how slovenly most people are content to think. It would be no very flattering compliment to a man's figure to say that he is taller than the Polish dwarf, shorter than Giant O'Brien, fatter than a skeleton, and more slender than Daniel Lambert. No speaking can be less ornamental than that of Demosthenes, or more diffuse than that of Cicero.'

Heldenmaier lays it down as a maxim of education, that freedom is the all-essential condition of growth and power. There can be no fervour while, in the language of Sam Slick, 'Talk has a pair of stays, and is laced up tight and stiff.' It is freedom which is the active element of all fresh and vigorous style. Dr Gilchrist observes that—'What one of the ancient philosophers said of laws may be truly said of rhetorical rules: they are like cobwebs which entangle the weak but which the strong break through. The first rule of good composition is, that the composer be free and bold. Before a man can be a good thinker or a good writer he must be free and bold.' . . .

As soon as a man understands a subject, he is in a condition, so far as ideas go, to write or speak about it. If he has also courage to write himself in his words, he may be original. But if he forget that fulness and freedom are both blind, and that without the revealing lights of taste, perspicuity and brevity, he may offend, bewilder and tire.

An old woman who showed a house and pictures at Towcester expressed herself in these words:—'This is Sir Richard Farmer; he lived in the country, took care of his estate, built this house and paid for it, managed well, saved money, and died rich. *That* is his son; he was made a lord, took a place at Court, spent his estate, and died a beggar!'

A concise but striking account. The old exhibitor had no doubt learned brevity by weariness of repetition and the desire of giving satisfactory information in a few words—difficult to acquire; but the art can be acquired, and a style marked by sentences concise and short is no mean one Butler, who knew so many things, tells us:—

> As 'tis a greater mystery in the art
> Of painting, to foreshorten any part,
> Than draw it out, so 'tis in books the chief
> Of all perfections—to be plain and brief.

Douglas Jerrold wrote of the Bishop of Exeter:—'What a lawyer was spoiled in that bishop! What a brain he has for cobwebs! How he drags you along through sentence after sentence—every one a dark passage—until your head swims!' Jerrold, whose style was as bright as his mind, knew the darkness which prevails where perspicuity is absent.

Brevity and precision are more manifest among our French neighbours than among ourselves. The speeches made to mobs—the most hurried placards, abound in the felicities of condensation. Europe has been agitated with communism before our time. Few could tell you what was meant by it. Yet a century ago, Morelly thus expressed it:—'It is the solution of this excellent problem—to find a situation in which it shall be nearly impossible for man to be depraved or poor.' We have never on this side the Channel exceeded the felicity of this description.

'The style of Bunyan,' says Macaulay, 'is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. His vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet, no writer has said more exactly what he wanted to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, this dialect of plain working men, was sufficient.'

In the first edition of *Practical Grammar* (by the present writer) there was direction open to the charge of vagueness. If remarks had to be made at the end of a statement, it was directed that they should be neither 'too strong nor too tedious.' But when he subsequently asked his class at the City Mechanic's Institution at what point of

effectiveness a man might be said to be 'too strong,' it was agreed that there was error somewhere. And the injunction not to be 'too tedious' was found to imply that we might be tedious in some degree—which hardly seemed desirable. Then it was asked, What is strength? Some answered power. What was power? Some said effectiveness. But it was soon felt that these definitions left us, like Swift's definition of style, 'the use of proper words in proper places.' What were proper words and proper places still remained open questions. So, if power was strength, and strength effectiveness, what was effectiveness was still unknown. It was finally agreed that to be strong was to be just, and the remedy of tediousness was brevity. We therefore agreed that 'remarks just and brief' was the proper expression to have used. For what was just could never be 'too' strong, and what was brief could never be 'too' tedious. From which we also learned that strength of comment lay in just sentiments, and that tedium was the tiresomeness of prolixity.

When Professor Huxley speaks or writes, his style seems the product of an original mind dwelling in an atmosphere of realities. His sentences are as fresh as bunches of grapes gathered the same morning, the bloom is upon them.

The Rev. J. R. Green was one of the few writers of recent years whose style is the envy and admiration of critics as well as his readers. Mr Green had his own preferences as to who should write about him. Whether Mr W. J. Loftie, 'the Historian of London,' is one does not appear, but in the *New Princetown Review*, he describes Green's ideas of style:—'A German in research, a Frenchman in writing—that was his formula; and a thorough familiarity with French historians, and novelists too, had more to do with the nervous, manly, graphic English of his works than is generally supposed. I have heard him say that English history should be written so as to be as entertaining as a French novel. I remember one of his maxims about composition:

—"Take the public, as it were, into your confidence; write to them as if they knew as much as you do yourself; but in your own mind assume that they know nothing." This is an intelligible, and therefore an instructive passage.

The loaded style never lasts in literature. Excellence lies in the thought expressed, and not in ornate phrases. The one thing the hearer or reader has to look to is the quality of the idea sought to be conveyed to his understanding. If it comes to him in terms which commend it or exalt it, so much the better. The idea should be presented bright and clear, all phrases which merely glitter about it do but dazzle those who have to see it. When the orator describes the

Wide, grey, lampless depth of time,

his simple language best depicts the impressive vision.

A column has been erected at Monte Pincio, in Rome, to the memory of Galileo's imprisonment in the neighbouring palace of the Medicis. It bears the following epigraph: —'The neighbouring palace, once the property of the Medicis, was the prison of Galileo-Galilei, guilty of having seen the earth revolve round the sun.' He who wrote this epitaph had a style worthy of Rome.

Joseph Barker was a man of slovenly power, and yet a moving influence in his day. He found his way to the popular understanding by a force of style all his own. Ebenezer Elliot and other good judges of rhetoric in Sheffield, told me Barker excelled all other platform speakers they had known in the vigorous use of Saxon English. He was always understood by the multitude; like Dr Johnson (whom I do not think Barker ever read), he knew the literary force of repeating nouns; unless a pronoun could be used near to the noun. When the noun was pale in the memory of the crowd or congregation before him—he repeated the noun. The hearer, therefore, had never to go back upon what he had heard. The main noun being

brought again before him, he always knew what the matter in hand was. This practice gives amazing force and clearness to popular speech. It is a mere mechanical element of style which everyone might employ with advantage to hearer or reader.

He who wants to know whether he has written what he wishes to say, and as he ought to say it, let him read it aloud to himself. Even his own voice will seem as apart from him as that of an auditor. Or let him do as the shrewd Molière did, read his composition to his cook, if no one else is at hand—read it to anyone who will listen—and the reader will at once become sensible of redundancies, omissions, irrelevancies, and incongruities, of which his own wit will never make him sensible. Even stupidity as an auditor will improve style.

The text of a great writer resembles a piece of Gobelin tapestry or some golden embroidery. Every page is from the same loom. You know every sentence by the texture, the colour, and the design. Some books are like calico prints, you read them by the yard; the gay or gaudy pattern diverts or serves for common use. In some books, insipid, glaring pieces of flimsy meaning, without harmony or purpose—stare at the reader in every chapter. But in George Eliot's writing, for instance, every portion is part of one well-woven fabric, strong, dainty, and durable, and is as a wealthy garment of the mind.

All that is in the power of a student of style and who wishes to make a style for himself, are clearness, brevity, and the use of relevant and vivid similes. 'Be clear,' was the best thing Napoleon said to his secretaries. Clearness of statement can be acquired by anyone who has clear ideas. Brevity is almost a mechanical attainment, since a man has only to stop when he has written as much as his adversary would read if sent to him—or would listen to if spoken to him. Meaning, as has been said, may be made clearer and even enlivened by comparison. Alma-Tadema says, 'As the

sun colours the flowers, so does art colour life.' Comparisons and similes are the sun of style and impart colour to it.

A painter or sculptor will acquire decision and finish by studying the great masters of the twin arts; he may thus improve his own style, but the turn and quality of his mind will remain his own. In like manner a rhetorician will profit by the study of great writers. For vigorous transparency and classical grace, Grote counted Mill's essay on *Liberty* to be the most striking production of modern time. Let the student keep as free as he can of mean conversation or mean books. Buddha says:—

'Let no one think lightly of evil, saying, in his heart, "It will not come near me." Even by the falling of water drops a water-pot is filled; and the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gathers it little by little.' Then let the good come near, and little by little the heart will become full of excellence.'

A dinner cooked anyhow, a coat cut anyhow, without study of the figure or kind of person to be clothed, would neither delight the taste nor the sight. Style of speech means prevision and adaptability to the occasion and to the end sought. In every case, transparency and brevity are the permanent virtues.

Dean Swift, who saw further before him than any man in the great day in which he lived, said he who makes two ears of corn grow where only one grew before deserves well of mankind. The contrary is true in literature. He who makes one sentence to express a meaning, while another would employ two to do it, confers a sensible benefit on all whom he addresses, and deserves the gratitude of every reader.

CHAPTER XXXI

WHAT HAS BEEN SAID

'WHAT am I going to say?' is a question a speaker may usefully put to himself before commencing his address. If he does not know, it will, in most cases, be bad for the audience. It is the principal thing, or two or three of the main things, which should be clear, distinct and uppermost in the orator's mind. Whether he keeps to notes he may have made for illustration will matter little to him if he can make his distinctive objects evident to the hearers. But as a speech nears its end the need for a not less important interrogatory arises.

'What has been *said*?' is the next question many a speaker might put to himself before the conclusion of his speech. By that time he ought to know what he has been talking about—but may not—and it may be the audience are not quite sure themselves, so that a brief incidental as it were, an unpretentious, but nevertheless a salient recapitulation of the essential points of the address will be useful. In cases where a statement made is clear, strong, vigorous and coherent, a few impressive sentences at the close are sufficient. If the speaker has reason to think his audience have not a clear conception of his subject he may restate it in a few words at the close. In no case slavishly recapitulate all points made. Do no more than recall the animating principles, which should be fixed in the

hearer's or reader's mind, as is sought to be done in this chapter. Let the speaker not forget that many persons never think, though they think they do.

The effectiveness of a speech is governed by its purpose which must animate the orator. And for effectiveness, unsurpassed clearness, if the speaker can attain to it, is the main condition. How can a man be moved or guided by what he does not see? It is like the large stone visible at low water in a river in Cavan, on which is carved the notice—'When this stone is out of sight it is not safe to ford this stream.' But what traveller can read the warning when it is 'out of sight?' The reader will surely be drowned, unless the meaning stands above the water of words.

The late Archbishop of York (Dr Magee) was so sensible of the value of purpose in speech, or essay, or sermon, that he advised young preachers when they had written a sermon and could not give a name to it, to throw it away, decide upon a name, and write to that, otherwise, 'a man who starts without a definite purpose is at the mercy of his words.' Words, and not a fixed intent, have the command of him. During the Mexican war one of the generals said to Captain Bragg, 'The crisis has arrived—fire.' The Captain said to his lieutenent, 'You hear what the General said—"The crisis has come—fire."' The lieutenant replied,—'But I see nothing to fire at.' 'Then,' said Captain Bragg, 'fire at the crisis.' No report states whether they hit it. But the moral of the incident is relevant. The orator, like the soldier, must aim at something, and have something to aim at. In rhetoric, as well as in morals, the saying of the Mogul Sultan Achar is true,—'I never knew a man lost on a straight road.'

'There are,' said the shrewd Archbishop Magee, 'three kinds of preachers:—First, the preachers you *can't* listen to. Second, the preachers you *can* listen to. Third, the preachers you *can't help* listening to.'

The last kind of preacher is one who acts on the wise maxim of Vinet, and 'looks after himself as though he were somebody else'—as everyone must do who would become a successful public speaker. He who would practise Vinet's rule must court debate and engage in it, when he will learn that there are two sides, and sometimes more, to most questions. Not knowing this, causes many persons to be blown about by every wind of doctrine, which confuses them when they encounter it, because they have not known it, and, of course, have not regarded it in forming their own judgment. Unfamiliar with opposite views, they are afraid of them, and are unhinged by them. William Black, the novelist, relates that it was by the merest accident in reading the proofs of his novel of *Wolfenberg*, that he discovered that the printer had made his heroine who was to die by an 'overdose of opium' die by an 'overdose of opinion.' More people die in this way than are imagined. A well-informed man is never in danger from an overdose of opinion. A prudent man seeks every kind of relevant opinion before he forms his own. Dr Johnson, who was always for discussion, derided the fear of rival views, saying, 'If contrariety of opinion would poison a man, a politician would die in a day.' Contrariety of reasoned opinion—none others are entitled to attention—are the elements out of which a sound judgment is formed. He whose mind is set on sureness as to facts will never go far wrong, nor will he mislead others. 'If people,' says the Rev. Dr Edward Everett Hale, 'would only stop talking where they stop knowing, half the evils of life would come to an end.' He who takes the trouble of personal investigation will avoid many errors. It is when anyone relies, without suspicion or care, upon what he learns from others, that the necessity for circumspection comes in. Rumour seldom touches the fringe of truth. Reports are to be distrusted and hearsay more so. Miss Edna Lyall's *Autobiography of a Slander* is a most instructive little book, on the careless,

unintended, tragic mendacity of modern days. Before anyone believes what he is told, he ought to ask himself what is the teller's capacity for attentive hearing and accuracy of memory? What opportunity had he of knowing the truth of what he relates? What motives has he for telling it? Is the tale-bearer a person of vigilant observation and habitual veracity of mind? Has he prejudice, animus, or interest, which may bias his impressions? If he merely tells what he has been told, what is the character, qualifications and attainments as to trustworthiness of *that* informant? Under what circumstance was the thing said which he reports? Circumstances under which a thing is said are like the context of a passage. The context is a part of the story. Without due sifting of evidence on which a man reasons, he may be deceived himself and, what is worse, he may deceive all who trust to his judgment. For he who retails as facts what he has taken no precautions to verify, and has not warned hearer or reader to that effect, becomes himself responsible for what error or mischievousness may be in them.

Of course, a man speaks in vain when the auditors cease to attend to him. He must obtain and retain the ear of the assembly, or he will fail to influence them. To this end he must not lead attention down lanes of digressions, or it will lose sight of the main line on which the train of argument runs. Nor must the minds of the hearers be allowed to stumble at words above their comprehension. Every speaker of sense will follow, as far as the question under consideration will let him, that golden rule of Cæsar's—'To avoid an unusual word as one would a rock.' In character, in manners, in logic, in style, the supreme excellence is simplicity.

George Sand tells us there is a good Goddess of Poverty. If you have choice in Pagan deities, choose the good Goddess of Lucidity, if there be one.

Lord Dalling, when Sir Henry Bulwer Lytton, showed a high order of caution and precaution as a diplomatist

When trouble with America arose on the question of 'indirect damages,' at the close of the planter's war in defence of slavery, American statesmen drew up a Treaty which was to close the affair, but opened it wider. Lord Dalling found in it the terms 'growing out of' which he said 'could hardly occur to anyone but a market gardener.' When he had to prepare a counter treaty, he took the trouble of going over all American Treaties, and in all important passages he only used such words as they had used before, in the sense in which American diplomatists had used them. To employ the language of Paley, this 'could not be gotten over.' Common ground was found and an international agreement came to pass.

On terms of imputation, Mr Serjeant Robinson, in his *Bench and Bar*, gives curious legal opinions. He relates that an action was brought before Mr Justice Maule by an attorney against a defendant for calling him a thief, a rogue, and a *fiend;* and as the plaintiff had no proof of any pecuniary special damage, he had to rely on the injury that must necessarily be inflicted on him in his professional capacity by the imputation of being a 'fiend.'

In summing up, Maule said:—'As to the word thief, it is a very ambiguous one, and does not necessarily impute what the law considers an indictable offence. For instance, to steal a man's wife, to steal away the affections of another, to steal a march upon anyone, would be no crime in law. Wives, human affections, and such things as marches are not at present the subjects of larceny. Rogue is different; it might certainly affect the plaintiff professionally, because a rogue ought not to be allowed to practise as an attorney. But the same principle does not apply to the term *fiend*. It may not be a complimentary expression, but I do not think to be a fiend disqualifies a man from being an attorney. If the learned counsel will point out to me any case where the Court has refused an application to place a fiend upon the rolls, I shall be happy to consider it.'

Contumelious epithets have the unpleasant tendency of suggesting the character and associations of the user. A cattle dealer of Berne, being indicted for calling another in the same way of business a 'swindler, a dirty dog and a convict,' the Court held that such language was but the current expressions of the cattle market, and below the dignity of notice.

John Addington Symonds, as remarkable for self-introspection as for his great attainments, said 'he found a pleasure in expression for its own sake, but he had not the *inevitable* touch of the true poet, nor the *unconquerable patience* of the conscious artist.' There is the genius of a great writer in this sentence, which explains with penetration and fitness of phrase, the unregarded conditions of supreme excellence.

Paderewski is a famous master of his art, but his skill was won and is sustained by application, which is instructive to those of indolent ambition, who believe in off-hand excellence. On the eve of Paderewski's first appearance in New York, he left his hotel at nine at night, went direct to Steinway Hall, induced the watchman to let him in, had the gas lighted, opened the biggest piano he could find, and sat before it from ten at night till four the next morning, with only the watchman for an audience. Then he went home, and after ten hours' sleep astonished a large audience by what most of them took to be spontaneous skill. The 'unconquerable patience' commended by Symonds has its place in literature and speech as well as music.

One who lately died—Robert Louis Stevenson, whose praise for mastery in writing every critic sang—said: 'I can always tell when an author does not write over and over again. His clauses may be unmusical, his words colourless and inexpressive, yet, if the order is perfect throughout, he will be a great writer.' Absolute rightness of order gives new force and significance to terms and

expressions, which would be lifeless without it. Stevenson's clauses had melody, colour and expressiveness, but the rightness of order, which imparted to them splendour, he acquired himself with 'infinite labour.'*

Yet the labour necessary to excellence is less than is commonly imagined, if the aspirant confines himself to things essential. Relevant knowledge is all that is required, and relevance is limited. Excessive acquisition of many things is as useless as excessive eating, and equally inconvenient for action. There are learned persons who read themselves stupid. Hume, in his wise way, said, 'A man's time, when well husbanded, is like a cultivated field, of which a few acres produce more of what is useful to life than extensive provinces, even of the richest soil, when overrun with weeds.'

Mr Arthur W. Hutton, being for seven years a priest in the Oratory at Birmingham, knew Cardinal Newman well. Mr Hutton tells us that 'Dr Newman's two volumes of Catholic sermons were written out and carefully corrected. But his spoken sermons were, by comparison, deplorable—apparently unprepared and without plan or point; throughout he was rambling and dreary. He told me himself,' says Mr Hutton, 'that he never *saw* the congregation he was addressing—a fact which, I suppose, by itself shows that he had no oratorical gift. But when he read with slow and musical enunciation the exquisite sentences he had penned in the privacy of his room, there was something almost magical in the effect.'

The noblest oration on oratory delivered in this century, so far as is known to me, is that by Lord Lytton, then Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, on the occasion of his installation as Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow. In one passage he said, 'Without earnestness a man might be admired as a firework, but he would never guide as a star.' Further, 'Though delivery no doubt is the appropriate excellence

* *Westminster Gazette*, at the time of Stevenson's death.

of the mere orator, the three-fold gift of the Parliamentary speaker is earnestness. Have but fair sense and a competent knowledge of your subject, and then be thoroughly in earnest to impress your own honest conviction upon others, and no matter what your delivery, though your gestures shock every rule in Quinctilian, you will command the ear and influence the debates of the most accomplished, the most fastidious, and, take it altogether, the noblest assembly of freemen in the world.' A man cannot be earnest at will. It is interest and conviction which makes anyone earnest. But though earnestness on any subject is not a quality at command, every man is in earnest about something, and if his desire is to speak well let him confine himself to questions in which he is sincerely concerned. A speaker may be entertaining without sincerity, but cannot be impressive without it.

Oratory is what Mr Goldwin Smith called it, 'the fusion of argument and passion.' Oratory is reason animated by human interest—essential truth endowed with new life.

The manifest sincerity with which Lord Lytton commended maxims of oratory to the students of the University, served him well. The 'outburst of long-continued cheering' which followed its close, showed that. The brilliant sense of what he said implied conviction as well as premeditation. An engaging presence and physical power—two important conditions of oratory — he had, but his manner was greatly against him. It showed an entire lack of oratorical art. One who heard him said—'There were no winning tones; his action was ungainly; he moved his arms from his elbows; his voice was monotonous, and in the grander passages of his address he had no better mode of indicating their importance than by throwing himself into an extra erect attitude, and pronouncing his words louder and with a greater drawl than usual.' I have heard him speak in the House of Commons in the same way, when he yet charmed all who listened to what he said, and were un-

regarding as to how he said it. It was his audibility and sense which saved him. Ever true is the saying of Buddha, that 'pleasant speech and the word that is well spoken are great blessings.'

For all students one rule holds good—not having all the talent you desire, nor all the genius you covet, cultivate what you have. None know what that is till they give their powers fair play, full play and reiterated play. Jenny Lind said, 'If I had nothing in the world but music it would be enough. I become a different thing when I sing—different body—different soul.' But she did not know this till long after she began to sing.

When Professor Arminius Vambéry was asked by the Empress Eugénie how he travelled through Asia with a defective foot, he answered, 'Oh, your Majesty, one does not walk on his feet, but on his tongue.' Oratory is the education of the tongue, with that befitting accompaniment of gesture and manner which lend life to language. All the while the merit of eloquence lies in its use. The valid use of the art of public speaking and debate is the protection of unfriended truth, and the vindication of imperilled right. Poets tell us that

> Ever the right comes uppermost,
> And ever is justice done.

Beware how you believe that. The right never comes 'uppermost' unless some one helps it up. 'Justice is seldom or never done,' unless strong argument compels men to do it. Adolphe Fischer tells us you 'cannot kill a principle,' but the people can be killed who assert it, and that is sufficient. The principle is suppressed for generations. Truth is said to be 'immortal.' Let us hope it is, but I have seen its voice silenced through the intimidation of those who stand forth to vindicate it. What is the good of dumb truth? This is why bigotry, intolerance and persecution are so hateful. They can and do suppress truth

and right. To resist these seemingly eternal agents of evil, all the arts of eloquence and reason are required. Speech and pen are the brilliant weapons by which the victory over error and injustice can be won.

The object of instruction in any art is to enable the student, in his hour of practice of it, to be master of all his powers. Could the minds of men be made palpable in bodily form, few would be found complete. The arms and limbs would be shrunken in some from want of due exercise—in many, the head would be entirely missing. As a man is himself the measure by which he judges other men, he will form a defective estimate of others who is defective himself.

Thus, to aim at excellence is to increase the power of understanding others. The quality of that self-knowledge, on which all efficiency is built, the Arabian proverb teaches us in the saying, 'Men are Four,' which is now put into English verse.*

The man who knows not that he knows not aught—
He is a fool; no light shall ever reach him.
Who knows he knows not, and would fain be taught—
He is but simple; take thou him and teach him.

But whoso, knowing, knows not that he knows—
He is asleep; go thou to him and wake him.
The truly wise both knows, and knows he knows—
Cleave thou to him and nevermore forsake him.

The succeeding chapter is as it were a summary of the maxims and suggestions of preceding pages as illustrated in the characteristics of legislative orators.

* By C. E. J. in *The Spectator*.

CHAPTER XXXII

PARLIAMENTARY ORATORY

IT does not, as I have said, require an orator to write of oratory—else I should not take this subject. To live in the atmosphere of eloquence is not to acquire it. A man may be a good musical critic and be quite unable to play like Paganini, or sing like Malibran. An art-critic may appraise Leonardo da Vinci who could never paint the 'Last Supper.' Many have criticised 'Hamlet,' but none of them have written a better play. He who witnesses a boat-race can see which oarsman will come in first, though were he in the boat himself he would come in last. For myself, I have known a sufficient number of orators to become a connoisseur of oratory. But though I have lived near the rose, I have not myself acquired the scent.

Two things are mistaken for oratory—eloquence and splendid speaking—whereas stimulant eloquence alone is oratory, and is known by readiness, fitness, fire and velocity of speech. Splendid speaking is description touched with colour, as may be seen in Huxley, Goldwin Smith, and Green, the historian. George Dawson was a speaker of repute in his day—the greatest platform talker known in this century. He not only rewarded your attention, he engaged it. The difference between the speaker and the orator may be seen in this:—

A good speaker is one who explains things with distinctness, terseness, and lucidity.

An orator displays energy, compression, and passion.

The object of the speaker is to give information—the object of the orator is to incite to action. The speaker illumines the understanding—the orator impels and directs the passions. The speaker is a guide, the orator is a master. A speech is light—an oration is force. Europe heard it in Gambetta's voice of storm, thunder, and fire. The second Sir Robert Peel's voice stands next in my mind for volcanic force, summoning attention and holding it. He who considers what the qualities of the public speaker are, will better understand what the qualities of the orator are. Pitt in the last century, and Chamberlain in this, are notable examples of commanding speakers. Romilly, in his *Dialogue with Percival*, says 'Pitt, who could speak fluently three hours together, came about us like the tide along the Lancashire sands, always shallow, but always just high enough to drown us.' Chamberlain, who singularly resembles Pitt in personal features, is not 'shallow' save intermittently, but he has Pitt's overcomingness in his clearness and directness, lacking Pitt's commanding voice and dignity of gesture. I was present a few years ago in an assembly at which Mr Chamberlain spoke, as did also several other distinguished persons. A stranger who knew none of them would say that Mr Chamberlain was the most gentlemanly speaker of them all, save Mr Gladstone, in readiness, undemonstrativeness, in resolution of tone and directness of expression; displaying not the force of passion, but the force of will, which are characteristics of the gentlemanly speaking, I go no further. Other qualities of the gentlemanly manner are considerate courtesy, which is modest before genius, and which never wounds the susceptibility of the humblest by contemptuousness or disparagement—attainments which do not always accompany gifts of speech.

The good speaker is the Light-giver. I once asked John Stuart Mill as to the qualities of the late Lord

Derby, then Lord Stanley; he said, 'Lord Stanley is the only young nobleman I know who thinks it necessary to give reasons for the opinions he holds.' Logic is the light of speech. John Arthur Roebuck was the most mathematical speaker in Parliament in his time. He knew that the shortest distance between one point and another was a straight line, and he took it. Sitting at his table one day, he told me what he was going to say at Salisbury, where, at the Bishop's request, he was to deliver prizes to students. A fortnight later, I read a report of his speech in the *Times*, which, so far as I remembered, was word for word what he had said to me. The reason was that the words of a perfect statement are not changeable. If any term can be changed for the better, it means that a wrong word has been used. Thus, to a trained mind, understanding is in place of memory. The chosen words recur to the speaker because they are inevitable; none others will express the sense intended.

John Stuart Mill was a speaker of similar quality. He had principles, which guide the politician (as the Pole star does the mariner) through the tumultuous sea of party questions, which to other minds are trackless. A principle is a magnet which draws particles of sense, like steel, from all quarters to itself. He had also promptness in repartee, which always commands admiration in Parliament. When Lord Cranbrook, then Mr Gathorne Hardy, whom Mr Justin M'Carthy describes as 'fluent as the sand in an hour-glass, and stirring as the roll of a drum—but often as dry as the sand and empty as the drum'—when he (Mr Hardy) taunted Mr Mill with saying that the Tories were the 'stupid party,' Mr Mill at once rejoined: 'The honourable member misunderstands me. I never said that every Tory was stupid—what I said was, that if a man was stupid he was sure to be a Tory.'

Lord Cranbrook was a type of the explosive speaker. His father was an ironmaster, and Lord Cranbrook always

spoke like a blast furnace. He produced common-places red-hot, and spoke them with a red face, as I have often seen him. He would have been leader of the House when his party was in power but for his explosive tendencies.

Lord Sherbrooke, when Mr Lowe, displayed a classical clearness and brightness of speech. When he was contemptuous his sentences had teeth in them, which left their mark upon the mind. In the grey of a morning in 1868, when the Liberals had deserted Mr Gladstone, and left him with only a majority of five on a question of State, Mr Gladstone, with his usual high spirit, at once resigned. The alarmed deserters thought they might reassure him by a vote of confidence in him, and as Mr Lowe emerged into the lobby they asked his opinion of the idea. His answer was, 'I think, gentleman, that you cannot unpull a man's nose,' which ended that project.

Lord Derby, the son of the Rupert of Debate, was not a fluent speaker, but he excelled in vigorous lucidity. The hearer came to see exactly what Lord Derby saw, and what otherwise he would not see—the common-sense of a contested question, which only few persons ever do perceive.

In ease, in grace, in silvery tones, in the confidence he created that he could say, and continue to say, whatever he willed to say, no speaker, save one, in his parliamentary days exceeded Lord Coleridge.

Lord Westbury had in him the making of a Lord Chancellor of the quality of Lord Bacon. All the details of the most complicated subject seemed to lie open before his mind, in clear order. Never from a form so lusty and bucolic in appearance did words proceed so low, so continuous, so pellucid, so keen, and so unerring. His sentences were as clear cut as though turned out of one of Sharp and Roberts' lathes. I once heard him plead a case, when the court adjourned for lunch as he arrived at the word sesquipedalian. He had got only 'sesqui' pronounced. When the court returned he went on with 'pedalian' as though no interrup-

tion had occurred. He never lost the continuity of his argument. In reply in the House of Lords to the Bishop of Oxford, then unfairly known as 'Soapy Sam,' Lord Westbury remarked with rudeness upon 'the saponaceous oratory of the right reverend prelate.'

Of all the great speakers of our time none have been more instructive or more self-possessed than Cobden. He was one of the great masters of statement in Parliament or on the platform. Demands of agitation left him too little time to predetermine what he would say, but he determined it while he was saying it. Like Bunyan—who saw principles like men walking in the streets—so Cobden saw sentences as palpable things. He saw his words in the air before him as they left his lips. If he had put a proposition in terms redundant he restated it with retrenchment—that it might be more clearly seen. If the terms used were too brief he supplied those lacking—lest his argument might be incomplete. If a phrase went too far he qualified it, so that when he left it, ignorance could not misunderstand his meaning, nor malignity pervert it. When it was proposed in the House of Commons to go to war with America to procure cotton, so that our Lancashire weavers might not starve, Mr Cobden answered to the effect that war is not proposed by any honourable members from hatred to the American people—no one professes that; nor from love of war—no one had the inhumanity to avow that. The contention is that war would save us expense in supporting our unemployed weaver population by bringing cotton from the South. 'Since economy is the reason,' said Cobden, 'it might be well to observe that it would be far cheaper to feed all our unemployed people on turtle soup and champagne than go to war for cotton.' It would be better for the weavers, and neither make bad blood between kindred nor shed good blood in fratricidal battle.

Such is good public speaking—whose qualities are that it gives light, information, and direction without wasting time

by prolixity or perplexing the public understanding by ambiguity, or depraving the public ear by verbiage.

The orator is of a different order. He is a speaker inspired by purpose and passion. He has a torrid fervour—energy, action—the power of seeing the essential parts of his subject, velocity and fitness of expression, presenting an impelling argument with a directness that cannot be mistaken, and a force that cannot be evaded. Sometimes a single burst of scorn is a speech, as when Henry Clay, in slavery abolition days, made the famous retort to the slave-owners who tried to drown his voice by hisses, by exclaiming, 'That is the sound you hear when the waters of truth drop upon the fires of hell.'

There are six names in the memory of most persons which illustrate the characteristics of parliamentary oratory—Sheil, O'Connell, Beaconsfield, Cowen, Bright and Gladstone.

Sheil was a small man with a small voice, two disadvantages which only genius can cancel. He had a voice which squealed, but his sentences had a flame in them which scorched the adversary they touched. At other times, as Hawthorne said, 'He spoke with a strange wild sound like a language half blown away by the wind.' Sheil had Irish fervour of speech and French vivacity of action. There may be those who remember seeing Stella Colas as Juliet, in the garden scene with Romeo, throw herself forward over the balcony as though she would fall over; so Sheil threw his body across the table of the House of Commons in uttering his famous reply to the Duke of Wellington or Lord Lyndhurst, who had said the Irish were aliens in race, blood and religion. His accents were in his hair, his eyes, in his arms, in every limb. He was alive all over, and from this confluence of action proceeded a piercing stream of sentences of scorn and fire.

O'Connell had the three greatest qualities of an orator, (1) a commanding figure—his words came from above you; (2) a voice which could be heard by everyone, without which

the entire audience cannot be moved; (3) the sagacity to say things which most interested those who heard them. O'Connell, besides a majestic stature, had a three-fold voice: one of persuasiveness in the law court, one of dignity in Parliament, another of resounding raciness on the platform. He told us at a meeting in London how the birth-rate in Dublin had decreased 5000 a year for four years, adding, 'I charge the British Government with the murder of those 20,000 infants who never were born.' He saw nothing absurd in it, nor under his magical voice did his hearers until the next day. An Irish schoolmaster, of Birmingham, who was present, was more self-possessed. Mr Sam Timmins told me that the discerning schoolman prodded a friend near him and said, 'That is worthy of my countrymen.'

Addressing the Newhall Hill meeting in Birmingham, at which 200,000 persons were computed to be present, O'Connell observed a compact mass of 400 women from Rowley Regis, who had marched to Birmingham in the early morning. Grim and stalwart, with lusty arms, they maintained their position against the pressure of the vast throng. O'Connell's quick eye rested upon them for a moment and began his oration, exclaiming, 'Surrounded as I am by the fair, the gentle and the good.' They might be 'good'—the Black Country industries did not make women 'fair,' and had they been 'gentle' they had never been in that turbulent throng, but the intrepid compliment told. The women cheered, and cheered afterward everything he said. The men near cheered because the women did, and the crowd behind cheered because those before them cheered, and so the fortune of the great oration was made. Anyone can read how it was done in the first Lord Lytton's *New Timon*, where he says:—

> Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
> Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven.

Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
And wave on wave flowed into space away.
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
Even to the centre of the hosts around;
And as I thought arose the sonorous swell,
As from church tower swings the silver bell.
Aloft and clear, from airy tide to tide
It glided, easy as a bird may glide,
To the last verge of that vast audience sent.
It played with each wild passion as it went.

No member of Parliament in my time won in so short a time the reputation of an orator as Joseph Cowen. This came to pass by his speech in the House of Commons on the Bill for giving the title of Empress to the Queen. The House, impatient to vote, was filled with cries of 'Divide, divide,' when he rose for the first time to address it. All that could be seen was his dark, luminous eye, for his stature is short; all that could be heard was a new voice of manifestly honest tone. His argument was historical, compact, brief, in which three things were said never before or since heard in that House. He spoke of the Prince Napoleon as 'the son of a usurper;' he said 'the divine right of kings was killed on the scaffold with Charles I.;' and declared that 'the superstition of royalty had never taken deep hold on the people of this country.' All this was unusual and bold. Of all the sentences none were weak, and their impetuous rush never ceased until the end—and Mr Cowen acquired the fame of an orator in a single night.

If regard be had to the triumphs of public speaking, Lord Beaconsfield might be described as the greatest orator of our time. Race, religion, fortune and character were against him—but he had the instinct and art of expression, and was the only man in Europe in his time who had climbed on phrases to power. He did not study principles—he studied men, whom he labelled with disabling phrases as a professor would a plant, a shell, or a bird. His voice was an organ of policy, not of feeling. He might have been sincere in a way

of his own—but he never gave the impression, even by accident, that he believed what he said. He was no more English in his mind than Napoleon the Corsican was French, who Madame de Staël said was 'a man of unknown nature. Disraeli was as distinct in his ideas as though he belonged to another world. But he understood this world; he influenced men like a master. He advanced himself as only the unfriended can—by being of service to his employers or his party. He had audacity and his courage never forsook him. His ambition was to dazzle men. He bewildered others, but never lost himself. Once when he was overcome, not by what he felt but from what he had taken, he could not stand at the Treasury table without clutching it, when he exclaimed that 'he was thankful there was a table between him and Mr Gladstone, or that right honourable and impetuous gentleman might spring up and attack him personally.' All he meant was that he might, but for the table, fall into the arms of his adversary. Thus he gave the public to believe that he needed protection, when all he needed was support. His merit was that he introduced pleasantry into politics. His wit stood him in the place of principle. He touched public affairs with a light hand; and being without prejudices or preferences, he often stated with admirable force the case to which he was opposed, when it did not interfere with the purpose in hand. As Cobden once said of Palmerston, he was entirely impartial, he had no bias—not even towards the truth.

Disraeli's oratory was based on a Jewish craving for effect, an instinct of speech, and early knowledge of himself. In *Vivian Grey* he described himself as he always remained—gracious to those who aided his ambition, vindictive to any who opposed him. Mr Stansfeld, who had no mean power of his own, early expressed in Parliament that contempt for Disraelian principles, which Lord Salisbury—when Viscount Cranbourne—published a *Review* to expose. After Stansfeld's speech, Disraeli said to a friend, 'I will do

for that educated mechanic;' a well-chosen phrase of hatred and malice. Soon after, he commenced nightly attacks on Stansfeld, as a friend of Mazzini, saying there was an underground passage between Thurloe Square, where Mazzini visited Stansfeld, and the Treasury bench on which Stansfeld then sat. This continued until ended by Bernal Osborne, with his Jewish wit, often as effective as Disraeli's, but with a generous vein in it. Sir Richard Strachey, whose elongated visage was blue, rendered so by some gunpowder explosion, abetted the attack. After this had gone on for a month, Osborne broke in, 'Mr Speaker, I think this farce has gone on long enough. Here, every night towards twelve o'clock, in stalks the honourable member for Norwich, like a tragedy king, with his dagger and his poisoned bowl; and he not only acts the character, he looks it.' This hit at Sir Richard's blue visage extinguished him in ridicule and laughter. He probably disposed of his dagger and bowl in Wardour Street, for it no more appeared in the House. Thus wit succeeded where reason had failed. Whoever stood in Disraeli's way he stabbed with words as a bravo would with a dagger. Lord Beaconsfield was the most polished gladiator Parliament has known since the days of Canning, and he would have been one of the first of orators had he cared for anything save the effect of it on his own fortunes.

We now turn to him whom Mr Beresford Hope described as the 'White Lion of Birmingham'—Mr Bright, who had the voice of an organ, at once strong and harmonious, which swelled but never screeched. A resolute face, and a resolute tone, gave him a commanding manner; this, united to a stately way of thinking, gave him ascendency in oratory. Disregarding details, he puts the relevance of a question so strongly that it was difficult to express in other words the same idea with equal force. As I have said elsewhere, take this passage in one of Bright's orations, in which you see his passion for justice and his method of speech. He exclaims,—

'I believe there is no permanent greatness in a nation, except it be based on morality. I do not care for military greatness or military renown; I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. There is no man in England less likely to speak irreverently of the crown and monarchy of England than I am; but crowns, coronets, mitres, military displays, pomp of war, wide colonies and a huge empire, are, in my view, all trifles light as air, and not worth considering unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, baronial castles, great halls and stately mansions do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage.'

Here is the Homeric trend of simplicity and power, not among metaphysical abstractions (which flit before the mind like shadows) but among men and things, palpable to every one, and touching living interests. But let anyone turn to the record of Mr Bright's speeches in the Anti-Corn Laws days, and compare the recurrence of famous figures of speech thirty years later, where he described the army and navy as kept up for the outdoor relief of the aristocracy, and he will see that the crude form of the earlier day and the finished expression of later years, is as different as the flint-headed spear of the Mongol from the rapier of Toledo. A famous statue is not cut out of the first block the sculptor lays his hands upon, nor is an oration perfected except by many efforts.

In the clearness and melody of a far-reaching voice, in spontaneity of expression, in fertility of thought begotten by the subject while speaking upon it—in action animated by the sense of mastery and conviction, Mr Gladstone excels all living orators. He poises himself on words as an eagle poises himself in the air. When the Opposition speakers in Parliament have unexpectedly collapsed, Mr Gladstone (when leader of the House) is suddenly called upon by the Speaker to close the debate. To reply at once

on what has not been said, as well as upon what has, requires consideration. I have heard Mr Gladstone on such occasions speak for several minutes without saying anything. What you hear is a well-woven texture of articulation—an unbroken continuity of argumentative mist—an almost infinite and coherent extension of glittering vapour. The circumambient air is thick with words, all connected—with nothing. An Italian poet has described exactly what takes place:—

I certainly beheld (nor do suppose
My sight deceived me aught) that in the air,
A fume or vapour thin and subtle rose,
And by the wind began revolving there:
Thence to the topmost clouds its sprays it throws,
But of a substance so exceeding rare,
That scarce the naked eye its form could see:
It seemed as like the clouds composed to be.

All at once the cloud is cleared away with a sudden gesture and you hear the words 'Mr Speaker.' The orator then has made up his mind as to the scope of his reply, and then follows a stream of sentences direct, compact, and pungent—crisp as the curling wave, definite as the bullet. Mr Gladstone is the greatest orator of our time, who can be serious and humorous, earnest without being heavy, vehement without imputation—a very rare attainment. In all the hurricane of personalities, at one time blown upon him from every quarter, only one charge of imputation was brought against Mr Gladstone, and that was that he had described an opponent as a 'certain' person. It is not giving a political but a rhetorical opinion to say that there is no example on record of any speaker of Mr Gladstone's eminence, who has displayed his abstinence from personal imputation—the easiest and most popular of all the arts of oratory. Invective relieves the speaker of the trouble of proof, and delights the auditor who ceases to think of the

question at issue, and does not know that it is withdrawn from his sight. Outraged partisans then appear upon the scene and principles disappear.

Of the two great orators of whom I have spoken, Mr Gladstone has the subtler reason—Mr Bright had the stronger fire. Mr Gladstone is moved by a sense of duty, which seeks for reasons and waits for occasions. Mr Bright was incited by a sense of justice, which is impetuous and acts from indignation. Mr Bright's eloquence was more volcanic and imposing; Mr Gladstone's more resembles lightning—greater in vividness, and revealing under its flashes a greater extent of hidden country. Mr Bright seemed to take just the quantity of words upon the platform which he required, and, like parts of a well-fitting structure, each word fell into its place as the mighty oration proceeded. With Mr Gladstone it is as though he took upon the platform with him vast piles of the English language, from which he takes, with a swift hand, whatever he requires for the purpose of the moment; words of strength, or beauty, or brightness—of light, or shade, or force, until each passage is perfect. When a sentence is begun, you cannot always foresee how Mr Gladstone will end it. But the great artist never fails. His eye sees all the while the fitting word lying by his side, and he dashes it in with the spontaneity of a master, and light is diffused all over the argument, as in a picture which has just received the final touch of genius. That is Parliamentary oratory. The audience is the most cultivated and critical in the world. The finish which is applauded in the Senate would seem tameness on the platform.

In that arena where distinction won reaches to posterity, there are discerning plaudits for those felicities of speech which Tennyson describes in *Virgil*:—

> Landscape-lover, lord of language, more than he that sang the Works and Days.
> All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd.
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word.

The qualities of the noblest style are all comprised in this splendid praise. But the House of Commons, though fastidious, is not foolish—neither is it impatient to do right; as a rule, it is not impatient to do anything, but it likes to know what it is doing. It thinks with Mark Antony—

Who tells me true,
Tho' in the tale lie death,
I hear him as he flattered.

And the working-class member who, like Mr Burt, is diffident without being afraid and intelligent without being presumptuous, may gain the ear of the House. It may be charmed by a picturesque phrase, as it was by the Irish member who praised the whisky of his country above all other 'because it went down the throat like a torchlight procession.' The House gives ear to an honest voice. There are some members of Parliament in whose voice there is an accent of petty larcency. But he who, speaking with sincerity of manner, gives information upon subjects which he knows and is known to know, he is listened to, however unpretending or vernacular may be the language in which he tells his story.

I omit many high names and many illustrations of the distinction other speakers and orators have attained which would interest the readers nearly as much as those I have cited. I omit them lest by too great variety I distract attention from the nature of oratory, which it is my duty to make clear and keep clear in the reader's mind. Most of us hope that the English Parliament may maintain its ascendency as the first political assembly in the world. Most of us hope that its members will always so comport themselves in

dignity and excellence as to challenge the imitation of public men. Whatever time may be given to increase public interest in the high character of Parliament, or inspire any who may go there with the desire to sustain it, is of the nature of patriotism.

Long may it remain the merit of Parliament that what a man says shall be more regarded than how he says it. Landor warned one, inattentive to this, who had brilliance without purpose:—

> Here lies our honest friend, Sam Parr,
> A better man than most men are.
> So learned, he could well dispense
> Sometimes with merely common sense;
> So voluble, so eloquent,
> You little heeded what he meant.

The speaker and the orator alike must mean something, and something distinctive. All men cannot be orators, but every man will speak better and write better by knowing the qualities which go to make the orator. Lord Brougham defined oratory in the sense in which he himself excelled in it, as the power of seeing, when you begin a sentence, all through it, and of knowing at the opening what the end is to be.

Protracted and parenthetical as Brougham's sentences often were, there was never confusion in them; they always terminated intelligibly. The parenthesis, when limited and direct, is a sign of mastery, showing that the speaker never loses sight of his subject. Concentration and directness make the force of speech. Too many objects presented to the mind prevent the points essential being seen. Too much said means something relevant hidden by a crowd of words, which essential something should stand distinct, clear, open, alone, and endowed with the glory of space. Economy in words, stopping at sufficiency, implies mastery of statement. Captain Cuttle said 'his power to put his

hands on a few words whenever he wanted them came from his not wasting them as some do.' Walter Savage Landor, who himself equalled Plutarch in the vigour which comes of terseness, said:—

'Phocion conquered with few soldiers, and he convinced with few words. I know not what better description I could give you either of a great captain or a great orator.'

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TO READERS AND CRITICS OF THE FIRST EDITION

CRITICS in reviews and in private letters have made the author their debtor by emendations they have suggested, by which he has profited, as the text will show, and which he would acknowledge in detail if space permitted. He cannot but be gratified by the opinions expressed as to the utility of the book. Here and there a remark has been made that some of the illustrations which sprinkle the pages are not new. The author never troubled whether they were old or new; his only thought was, were they to the purpose? They were not 'dragged' into the line of his argument; they lay in his way. Not in a single instance were they cited for their own sakes, but solely because they yielded light and guidance on the course along which he had undertaken to pilot the student. No mariner hesitates to avail himself of the northern constellation, notwithstanding that the Pole star is a very 'old chestnut.' One illustration I have not been able to avail myself in the text the reader may be glad to see:—

Time and Oblivion

(SUGGESTED BY A QUOTATION FROM PROF. HEEREN IN MR. HOLYOAKE'S 'PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE.'—P. 216.)

SAD Time, his face furrowed by many a fear,
Beside the solemn sphinx aweary stands,
And looks across the dismal desert sands,
Where stately fanes in glory once did rear.
Oblivion, Time's sister, gaunt and drear,
Crouches hard by a pyramid; her hands
Cyclopean puzzles make. At her commands
Old glories turn to dreams and disappear.
The traveller passing through these desert miles,
Surveys the ruins with astonished eyes,
And asks the name of those who built these piles,
These giant statues prone in crumbling aisles.
He asks, but meaningless are her replies,
Made up of mumbled words and muttered sighs.

W. E. A. AXON.

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